

# ALBERTA NATIVE NEWS



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# ALBERTA NATIVE NEWS

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## Survey highlights key First Nations issues

Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine addressed the latest findings of the Aboriginal Peoples Survey released by Statistics Canada. The survey examined health, housing, language and education for Aboriginal peoples living off-reserve.

"The findings of the Aboriginal Peoples Survey show that our people living off-reserve face many of the same challenges as our people living on-reserve," said the National Chief. "We must turn things around by building partnerships not only with government but with the private sector. This will strengthen First Nations and the country as a whole. I have always maintained that the First Nations agenda is Canada's agenda."

National Chief Fontaine and the AFN are implementing a strategic plan to address key priorities for First Nations, which is reinforced by the results of the recent survey.

"One of my top priorities is First Nations housing," said National Chief Fontaine. "The survey reveals that 17% of Aboriginal people off-reserve live in crowded conditions, with more than one person to a room. That is more than twice the national average."

The challenges highlighted by the survey are common in First Nation communities. Issues like the lack of potable water, increased rates of chronic disease, lower completion rates for secondary and post-secondary education and the continued erosion of Aboriginal languages are, in many ways, connected.

"We take a holistic view of health, and that means looking not only at the individual but also at their environment and living conditions," said the National Chief. "Overcrowded housing and unsafe drinking water affect not only health but educational success as well."

In terms of education, First Nations people off-reserve are still lagging behind the general population in terms of completing elementary, secondary and post-secondary school. The major reason cited for First Nations students leaving secondary school is "boredom" (20%).

"Education is a cornerstone of success," said the National Chief. "We need greater First Nations control of First Nations education to ensure the curriculum and classroom are relevant to our youth so that they stay in school."

Our post-secondary students say they need more resources and better access to child care so they can stay in school. And we must do more to support our languages because the survey shows they are in danger of disappearing. These are all priorities that require urgent attention." The National Chief reiterated his commitment to working with

all stakeholders.

"The First Nations population is very young and they will be part of driving the labour force in the coming years," said the National Chief. "It is in all of our best interests to ensure they are educated and well-trained and that there is a return on our investment. This way, we will ensure that Canada moves out of 8th place on the UN Human Development Index and regains its ranking at number one."



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# Report documents deaths of Natives in police custody

by John Copley

A recent report commissioned by the First Nations Summit, and prepared by the Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of British Columbia (NCCABC) outlines numerous instances where Aboriginal citizens, mostly young males, have either died in jail or have been shot or injured by police in B.C. The report doesn't stop at B.C.'s boundaries however, as numerous cases outside the province are among the dozens of cases documented in the report.

This is the first time the Native Courtworker program has attempted to track Aboriginal people who have died in police custody. The report was prepared after the First Nations Summit wanted answers in the shooting death of an Aboriginal woman at Alert Bay earlier this year.

"Many Native people who live in Vancouver's inner city face rough treatment by police, but most don't complain," explained Darlene Shackelly, the Executive Director of the NCCABC, in a recent interview. "They are too afraid that should they file a complaint, they're back on the street and they may have to face that same officer again. Fear actually prevents them from filing reports."

Ed John, Chair of the First Nations Summit (FNS), saw the list of names when it was presented at the Summit's September 26 assembly. He says he knows more people than those on the list. Others, including courtworkers, have said the same.

"There's really a large percentage of people in our communities that say they are not being treated fairly at the hands of policing authorities," added Chief John. "But as you know, we need policing in all of our communities. Every one of these situations is different, every one is unique and we need to understand what is happening. We need to let the world know, let the people know that there are too many of our people dying in these kinds of circumstances. We want to change that."

The report shows that during the past three years five Aboriginal men from northern B.C. have died in police custody. Since 1971, says the report, 19 Native people in British Columbia have either died in custody or have been shot by police officers. At least 31 Aboriginal people have died in police-related incidents in Canada since 1971; an additional 10 confirmed cases of police beatings or shootings also occurred in this time period, as did numerous unsubstantiated cases of police brutality.

"The report that we prepared," said Shackelly, "is one of a preliminary nature; it is by no means complete. There are still names to be added to the list; there are still questions that need to be answered. The study had three main objectives. First, to identify names of Aboriginal victims of police-involved deaths and/or serious injuries. Second, to collect information from (numerous) agencies and to identify what relevant information they do and do not report. Finally, our goal was to identify the key agencies



in B.C., Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and the federal government that collect and report information regarding Aboriginal deaths in custody, or police involvement in incidents of death or serious injury."

Native Court-worker programs, in one form or another, have existed in Canada for almost 30 years. In the late 1960s a pilot project initiated and funded jointly by the Secretary of State and the Departments of Indian Affairs, Health and Welfare and Employment and Immigration, began what would in 1973 become a responsibility of the Department of Justice, the Native Courtworkers Program. In 1972 the program was extended into British Columbia when an already formed provincial courtworkers group took over the program. That group, which included the Vancouver Indian Friendship Centre, Indian Homemakers' Association, Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, B.C. Association of Non-Status Indians, North American Indian Brotherhood and the John Howard Society called the new organization the Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of

British Columbia (NCCABC).

"The NCCABC is a provincial organization with a 28 year history of providing services to Aboriginal peoples in conflict with the law," explained Darlene Shackelly. "Over 60 staff are employed, including 31 courtworkers who cover 74 percent of the courthouses in the province."

The balance of the staff are drug and alcohol workers (based in Vancouver), family advocates, administrative personnel and senior management staff. NCCABC receives funding from the Department of Justice Canada and the B.C. Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General to provide support to Aboriginal people in conflict with the law, to ensure they receive fair and culturally-sensitive treatment. Services include information, counselling (but not legal advice), liaison and referral services.



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# Jordin Tootoo brings new life to the NHL,

by John Copley

He was born in Churchill, Manitoba on February 2, 1983. He grew up in Rankin Inlet, N.W.T. - renamed Nunavut, "Our Land" on April 1, 1999. During the 1998-99 hockey season he played with the Opaskwayak Cree Nation's OCN Blizzard, in Manitoba's junior league. The next year the feisty right winger was playing with the Brandon Wheat Kings and in the 2001 NHL entry draft he was chosen in the fourth round, 98th overall, sixth pick of the Nashville Predators. On Thursday, October 9, 2003 he stepped onto the ice and played his first shift in the National Hockey League. He is Jordin Tootoo, the first Inuit player to ever lace up a pair of skates and play a game of hockey in the NHL.

Just two days before his debut, which turned out to be a night of excitement, hard-hits and immediate fan endorsement, Nunavut Premier Paul Okalik unveiled a poster of Tootoo, one of several the government has commissioned to promote role models and to encourage Nunavut youth to set goals and then work to meet them. Other posters in the role model collection include that of well-known broadcaster Madeleine Alukariallak, electronic technologist George Metuq, and several Inuit Assistant Deputy Ministers.

"Jordin is a positive role model for Nunavut," said Premier Okalik, surrounded by school board and government officials, relatives, friends and others gathered to celebrate the moment at the Inuksuk High School in Iqaluit. "His skills, commitment and character give us confidence in ourselves and provide us with strength to deal with life's challenges."

Upon presenting the new poster, Premier Okalik told the gathering that the piece of artwork "captures the inspiration that Jordin creates on ice and moves it beyond the hockey rink to all parts of Nunavut so that we can all benefit from his example."

The poster will join others that are currently being

displayed in school gymnasiums, government administration offices, town offices and health offices throughout the territory.

Jordin Tootoo is a confident, outgoing, intelligent, well spoken and talented 20 year old who says he never does anything halfway. Two days before he played his first NHL game he told media gathered at the team's practice that it was time for him to prove to everyone that he could play in the NHL.

"I think it's time that I proved to everyone why all this hype's been going on about me," Tootoo said. "I just want to play hockey now and prove to people why everyone's so excited about me."

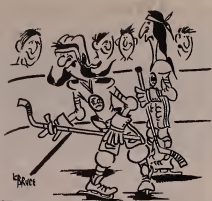
In his first game, he did just that. With his Dad Barney and his mother Rose, sitting in the rink alongside scores of other relatives, friends and well-wishers who'd flown in from Nunavut for the game, Jordin shone. He skated hard, he laid on the body and his ice time equaled that of a veteran. The fans love him, just as they did when he played for Canada at the World Junior Championships in Halifax. They gave his introduction the loudest ovation and they were chanting his name before the end of the second period. He was scoreless but he contributed big time and the Predators won the game.

"I think this is the perfect time for me to step into the NHL," responded Tootoo, five-foot-nine and 195 pounds, when asked whether or not he was ready to play in the bigs this year. "I have to prove to a lot of people that you don't have to be six foot five to play in the NHL."

Jordin is the second Tootoo to have a serious interest in the game of hockey. His older brother, Terrance, 22, also played the game, but tragedy struck the family in August 2002 when the troubled young man committed suicide shortly after being charged with impaired driving.

Jordin Tootoo is without question the biggest sports star in Nunavut and the first to ever make it to the hockey's most prestigious league. He's already overcome more obstacles than the average player at his age but that doesn't surprise anyone back home.

"He has tremendous ability; he encourages us and sparks our desire to create ambitions, to set and achieve goals. He has this tremendous ability to project his energy and encourages family and Numavummiut to make our dreams become reality," his cousin, Iqaluit Centre MLA, Hunter Tootoo, said



recently.

"I think he's the most talked about person around any kitchen table," remarked Rankin Inlet mayor, Lorne Kusugak, just days after Tootoo was signed to a three year contract by the Predators. "The community is excited. We're anxious to know if he can make the NHL."

He's proven that he can play in the NHL and as long as he maintains his enthusiasm, that won't change. He's a rough and tumble player who knows no fear and the fans love him for it. But he's also a talented player with puck handling finesse and speed to spare.

Predators coach, Barry Trotz, said he's impressed with what he's seen. Tootoo was among the team's leading scorers in exhibition play - two goals in the last two games. He led in penalty minutes too, with 25. During his final season with the Wheat Kings last year, Jordin accounted for 35 goals, 39 assists and 216 penalty minutes - all in just 51 games.

"If he didn't play a single game in the NHL, we'd be just as proud as though he'd played all 82," offered Mayor Kusugak. "He's already succeeded in our hearts."

"I'm ready," announced Jordin Tootoo before stepping on the ice for his first NHL game. "This is a great place to play hockey. The fans are starting to get into it and no better place for me to start off than to come to a young team and excite the fans; the more they get into it, the better I love the game."



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# Great day for Métis rights, says Métis Leader

Last month, the Supreme Court of Canada confirmed what Métis people since Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont have known: that Métis people have a constitutionally-recognized and affirmed Aboriginal right to hunt. The Court upheld the decision of the Ontario courts that found that the Métis community has a right to harvest as they had done historically.

"The highest court of this land has finally done what Parliament and the provincial governments have refused, to deliver justice to the Métis people," said Audrey Poitras, acting president of the Métis National Council. "To all the Métis people watching I want to say two words: we won, we won," she said. In Slave Lake, Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) Vice President Trevor Gladue was overjoyed about the ruling. "It proves that we are not second-rate Indians," he told media. As such, Métis won't be satisfied with expanded hunting privileges alone, Gladue said.

But for now Gladue says Métis people can still be charged for breaking Alberta's hunting regulations, but he believes it is only a matter of time before the obstacles are removed. "We're cautioning our people to use common sense," he says, but he is optimistic that the ruling on hunting will lead to the recognition of other rights as well.

"(It) opens the door for a lot more than hunting rights," he says. "For example, health, education and other rights that Aboriginal people enjoy in this country."

The federal cabinet minister responsible for Métis affairs agrees. "It would appear pretty clear that there are implications here that go beyond the narrow confines of the ruling," says Ralph Goodale, Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians.

"It's going to take a little bit of time to examine all these details, and to determine the full scope and nature of the application of this decision. Clearly it has direct relevance to a certain number of people in the Sault Ste Marie area (Métis hunters). It will be important for us to work together with all the parties involved here to examine the ramifications of that beyond that narrow fact situation."

"This is a great day for Métis Rights in British Columbia," said Métis Provincial Council of British Columbia President Harley Desjarlais. "The Supreme Court of Canada has confirmed that the Métis community has an Aboriginal right to harvest. The challenge before us now is to reach understandings with the British Columbia government that respects the reality confirmed by Canada's highest court."



For several months the MPCBC has been attempting to engage the B.C. government in a dialogue towards reaching an agreement on how Métis harvesting should be undertaken. The MPCBC priorities are to ensure the conservation of resources, public safety and respect for Métis harvesting rights.

"Unfortunately," said President Desjarlais, "the provincial government has been oblivious to the reality of Métis harvesting and pretends that Métis people do not possess constitutionally-protected Aboriginal rights. It is my sincere wish that Premier Campbell will now accept the open offer from the Métis people to work out reasonable and fair arrangements on Métis harvesting. I will be contacting the Premier and re-committing the B.C. Métis people to a respectful dialogue."

The current provincial government is prepared to talk to First Nations about harvesting and other land-based activities, but has not demonstrated any willingness to talk to the Métis people. Métis people account for over 25 percent of all Aboriginal people in British Columbia. According to the 2001 Census, there are 44,265 Métis people living in this province.

President Desjarlais also addressed the B.C. Métis community. "With great rights come great responsibilities. I urge all Métis people to respect the current harvesting regimes in British Columbia to give the MPCBC and the provincial government the opportunity to reach a respectful agreement."

"I would like to thank the Powells, the Métis Nation of Ontario and the Métis National Council and acknowledge their determination in leading this court case. Their efforts in Ontario have advanced the rights of Métis people throughout the Métis Homeland."

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8. Water Safety



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# About Our Cover

## Constance Rosa Wulf

by Ky Perrault

Constance Rosa Wulf sees Natives as "Canada's holocaust victims."

Genocide, loss of culture and marginalization have plagued Native Canadians since the first European set foot on this continent. Wulf depicts these themes in her art.

A multi-media work-in-progress, "I am Canadian" incorporates Native imagery to depict the plight of First Nations People.

The project "politically deconstructs events and emotions through the use of appropriation, overlaying and erasure techniques of the post-modern era to revisit what it means to be a Canadian."

And Wulf's Canada is a nation stolen from the First People.

Born in the United States, Wulf feels she is "in the middle," neither Canadian or American, a borderless identity she shares with First Nations people.

Criticized for appropriating the symbols of Native culture, Wulf defends her position by saying her work is representative, and not intended to "master the symbolism and artistic nuances of each individual tribal nation", but to present present-day racial prejudice and obstacles facing minorities.

Wulf's work deals with issues surrounding the Canadian identity, and recognizes that within the boundaries of the nation are many First Nations struggling for autonomy and healing.



## Thunderchild First Nation celebrates opening of community school

The Thunderchild First Nation recently celebrated the opening of the Piyesiw Awasis Community School. "As our community grows, our school must expand to accommodate more children," said Chief Winston Weekusk. "The Piyesiw Awasis Community School will provide quality education that is culturally relevant to our children and will help them to succeed in the future."

In addition, the facility has special features that reflect Cree culture and traditions. They include a

smudge area and sweat lodge for ceremonial purposes, and a walk-in cooler/freezer for traditional hunting. Other prominent features are building tiles depicting the portraits of 59 Elders from the Thunderchild First Nation and a rotunda seating area with symbolic features. The new school will provide educational instruction to children from Kindergarten to Grade 12 and will accommodate a projected enrolment of about 400 students. It includes two kindergarten classrooms, 13 standard classrooms with tutorial spaces, two special education classrooms, an administration area, computer science labs, industrial arts, home economics, science lab, stage library/resource centre, gymnasium, cultural classroom, weight room, student common area, and outside storage building. An investment of \$14 million was made in the building of the 4,359-

square-metre school, of which INAC contributed \$13,437,300 and Thunderchild contributed \$749,000. Construction created about 18,000 hours of employment for the First Nation.

The opening of the new Piyesiw Awasis Community School coincided with a community celebration to recognize the \$53-million settlement of the Thunderchild First Nation Specific Claim Agreement. "This is truly a historic moment for the people of Thunderchild First Nation," said Chief Weekusk. "I am proud to be a part of the process that rectifies the wrongdoing. My only regret is the Elders who began this process are not here to celebrate this day." The settlement resolves a claim that dates back to 1908, when reserve lands near the hamlet of Delmas were taken from the First Nation. Subsequently, the First Nation was relocated to a smaller reserve that was not well suited for farming. The settlement, ratified by Thunderchild First Nation members in a vote held last month, provides Thunderchild First Nation with \$53 million plus costs over five years for the damages and losses it suffered as a result of the 1908 surrender. The First Nation may use the settlement proceeds to purchase land on a willing-seller/willing buyer basis and request that up to 5,000 acres be set apart as reserve, subject to the settlement agreement and Canada's Additions-to-Reserves Policy.

Thunderchild First Nation is located about 85 kilometres northwest of North Battleford. The First Nation has about 2,000 registered members, with roughly half living off the reserve.

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# Celebrate Sobriety

## National Addictions Awareness Week celebrates 16th year

by John Copley

National Addictions Awareness Week (NAAW) is an important annual event that can be enjoyed by all Canadians, regardless of race, religion or political beliefs. It's a week that has been designed to broach what for many Canadians is an ongoing problem, substance abuse - be it alcohol, drugs, solvents and/or other mind-numbing likeliness. Addictions awareness programs have existed in Canada since 1981. Sponsored and administered by the St. Albert, Alberta-based, Nechi Training Institute and its many national partners, NAAW, which began its first national campaign in 1987, depends on support and participation for its success, and that's something it gets plenty of.

Last year more than 600,000 Canadians participated in the National Addictions Awareness Week campaign, involvement that assures the success of the events on-going theme, Join the Circle.

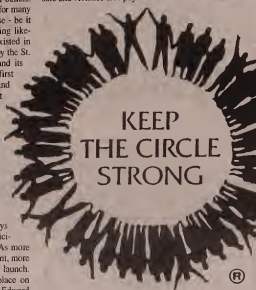
"This unity," says NAAW spokespersons, "exemplifies the work that is being accomplished by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to fight addictions in their communities."

Until last year the annual event, which is held during the third week of November, was always kicked off in the Edmonton area, but growing participation across the country has put an end to that. As more and more Canadians get involved in the annual event, more cities want to be included in the campaign's initial launch. This year the NAAW kick-off event will take place on November 16 at Lennox Island, located on Prince Edward Island.

At traditional Mi'q Ma'k Sunrise Ceremony will open this year's national event, followed by a pancake breakfast, a memorial mass and words by both Chief Darlene Bernard and Nechi Ego, Richard Jenkins, who will travel east to attend the event.

"The NAAW team," say organizers, "continues to work with our national partners to bring about positive changes

and awareness in addictions and healthy living choices. This year our focus is on process addictions and creating safe and violence-free physical and social environments for



children. It is important to deliver the message across the nation to get people thinking about the future and about the health of our children."

As the campaign continues to grow, the NAAW team continues to be busy. Working with the National Partnership Coordinating Committee (NPCC) to better serve the nation's specific population groups, the NAAW campaign has selected five strategically chosen groups according to the population they serve. These include: Main Stream Population; Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse; Inuit Population; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami; Metis Population; Metis National Council; Urban Off Reserve

Population; National Association of Friendship Centres; and On Reserve Population; National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation.

"British Columbia and Ontario," laud NAAW organizers, "have something to be especially proud of." For several years now they have been the NAAW campaign's annual leaders with more participation levels than other provinces and territories.

"Saskatchewan and Alberta are not far behind, but look who's catching up, YES the Northwest Territories!" emphasizes NAAW, who are encouraging Canadians "to jump on the health wagon in 2003 and help us make a difference."

National Addictions Awareness Week (NAAW) was conceived and developed by the Nechi Training, Research & Health Promotions Institute (Nechi) to promote activities at the national level. Initially this was an ad-hoc process put

in place to coordinate the campaign out of Edmonton.

Because there was no formal ongoing process, this ultimately limited the campaign to certain regions of the country and the campaign was not given the national recognition it deserved. In October of 1987, Jake Epp, Minister of Health and Welfare Canada proclaimed the third week of November of each year as Drug Awareness Week or NAAW.

The purpose of NAAW is to provide information and materials to and promote activities in both of the official languages (English and French) that will serve to raise awareness of addictions which affect people across Canada.

The "Keep the Circle Strong" theme was adopted in 1988 in the small Northwest Territories community of Coppermine. They used the slogan to promote the annual event for several years before it became the on-going theme.

"The slogan is delivered in a message that includes a circle of individuals, families, communities and nations who have chosen a healthy lifestyle free from addictions. In addition, the theme exemplifies the constant forward movement of the circle of life for all people and all nations, encouraging balance and harmony."

The NAAW objective is to provide information and promote a variety of activities that will serve to generate awareness on addictions issues that affect people across the country. The annual campaign has become an avenue for effectively mobilizing communities in working together towards a common goal, and acts as a tool that strengthens the NAAW partnership of First Nations, Inuit, Metis, and Non-Aboriginal professionals working in the area of addictions.

The Join the Circle Walk ceremony begins at City Halls, Native Friendship Centres and other locations across Canada on the third Monday of November. Guest speakers and entertainment accompany almost every celebration.

To learn more about how you can participate in NAAW 2003, or to learn where events are taking place in your region of the country, contact NAAW organizers by calling (780) 459-1884 or check out the NAAW website at [www.naaw.net](http://www.naaw.net).



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# Keeping the circle strong

by Peter Cole

The circle is important in the life of Native people. The circle means community commitment. It means co-operation, mutual support. Trust. It means sharing, equally distributing power and resources. A circle can expand infinitely in an outward direction as well as concentrically, allowing people to act within the meaning and context of one another. There is a natural tendency for strong spiritual, emotional, and physical bonds to be created and maintained in a circular structure. When you let alcohol become your confidante, your counsellor, your lover, your major point of contact with the world, you weaken the circle. It will break at that point and the affected individual will become emotionally, physically, and spiritually traumatized.

When a bottle is passed around the circle, the integrity of the individual is destroyed. The desire to cope is gone. The desire to face unenhanced reality disappears. The circle becomes a series of unconnected dots. People stop caring about their community, about themselves. They become the experience, the disease of alcoholism. Alcohol becomes the only connection. A bidirectional arrow going nowhere.

Everyone's heard it — that alcoholism is a disease, that it creates mutual dependencies, that healing is a process requiring intervention. We all know alcoholics, substance abusers. Many or most of us are disempowered individuals who have disenfranchised themselves, given their vote, their freedom to anything that will enhance reality. Like booze, cocaine, hashish, pharmaceuticals, coffee, tobacco, television, endorphins, any kind of stimulant, so long as it dis-

tracts us from the process, the reality of being human in a society which devalues individual integrity.

There are no legends, no old stories, myths from my people, the Coast Salish, that talk about widespread reliance on artificial ways of coping with life. You have the sweat, fasting, dancing, exposure to the elements, the immense power of consensual reality, people working together. Native people knew about fermented fruit, about grain rusts and mushrooms and peyote and herbs and poisons. They were there, part of nature, part of everything. So, why wasn't there wholesale abuse, the immanent addiction?

Because Native people had sovereignty. We were the mainstream — not marginalized like we are today. Because the first peoples of this country did not have the concept of the 'high' as being something separate from themselves, something to be exploited, something in which to hide, somewhere to go to deny that there were problems in the world that had to be dealt with. There were problems. There were ways of running individual and the individual was part of the community. There was no conceptual distancing of the self from society, no differentiation of problems into those concerning just one person and those involving everyone. People shared their lives with one another. They rejoiced and suffered together.

Today you have huge numbers of Aboriginal people who have no sense of purpose, no sense of place. Urban and rural derelicts. People isolated from one another, from their own inner wholeness. People who have forgotten their culture, their history, their language. Why? Because tradition has been lost, destroyed. Replaced by values from a foreign culture. These values have been created by institutions such as churches, schools, bureaucracies — places of confinement and behavioural modification.



We as Native people do not have access to our rights as human beings. We have only legislated rights which allow us to function within the institutions of a bureaucratic society. We need to be self-determining. We need what cannot be given to us, because no-one can give us what is rightfully ours.

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# The Healing Journey

## The Questions of Sobriety

by Daniel Beatty Pawis

For the longest time sobriety was like the "F" word in my vocabulary. It was something you just didn't talk about, or even mention if you considered yourself "cool". To party or not to party was the question (excuse me Mr. Shakespeare).

Back in my school days if you didn't partake in the usual weekend bash, then you were most likely stuck at home studying Shakespeare... which I found very boring. So anyways, this article is dedicated to our youth, because today they have to face a whole mess of new age pressures. I don't know if Shakespeare is still in the picture but I don't doubt it.

Our children have so much potential but they sometimes don't know it. The reason they don't know it is because often we don't take the time to tell them the important information. Just a few words of encouragement can put the biggest, happiest smile on a youngster's face... just try it sometime.

When we don't offer our kids encouragement, we suffer a serious collapse of our parenting skills. I certainly haven't been the best father figure, but I've seen love in children's eyes whenever I've shown them even a touch of encouragement and love; it's one of the best ways to bring a ray of sunshine when you least expect it.

I mentioned the unremarkable mistakes we tend to make when our parenting skills collapse, and there are quite a few reasons for this. Consider Alcoholism, Drug and Sexual Abuse, Domestic Violence, and School Dropouts. These are all major problems in our Aboriginal communities today, and while it's not just a First Nation problem, we'd better work a little harder at the contributing factors or else in a few years

time the percentage of Natives in prisons will escalate to an unbelievable number and its already an alarming statistic.

One of the biggest problems our children face is low self-esteem. And it not only applies to our youth, there's a lot of our older people who lack esteem as well. Just take a good look around, what do you see? Natives pushing shopping carts, kids barely into Junior High School forming their own street gangs.

I was a good student in school, I always got good marks until I discovered a few things like alcohol, drugs, and the fact that I was adopted. The betrayal I experienced quickly turned into bitterness and pain. Of course to ease the pain I turned to alcohol and drugs, and to take care of the bitterness I resorted to fighting. I lost faith in the abilities I was beginning to nurture, and I soon started to get off on hurting people, mostly myself.

Shakanebeah



have learned lots there. One of the things I learned is that you really have to want to change your life around before change actually happens. Another thing I learned is that there are a lot of caring and dedicated people who are there to help you. For the first few times I went to rehab, I figured I was there to teach everyone else!

A lot of people can actually learn to live happily without the use of alcohol, pills, crack cocaine, or met amphetamines... if that's your fuel, man, it sucks to be you. But I shouldn't boast because I've been there and done that as much or more as the next junkie. During the years I've walked this journey, I have made some really terrible choices. There are two operative words I try to use in my vocabulary today... one is CHOICE... and the other one is DECISION. Both of these words are related.

I have made some pretty hard choices, I've used women, I've been used by women to the point where it became totally unbearable. I won't get into the details of mentioning any names because even though I tend to be very vindictive, it turns out that I am the person who's responsible for making a relationship successful. When it becomes unbearable, I have a part in it somehow too.

Most of the time, alcohol and drugs have a lot to do with it. One of the better things Edmonton had going for it was the number of sober clubs, but now the Keep It Simple Club is on the verge of shutting down. The Rising Sun has closed its doors, and the Alamo Club is beginning to get boring. Don't take it personal folks but the last time I was there I counted about 14 people.

So maybe our Mayor, and our Premier can put their heads together and show the people in recovery that they actually can agree on something. And if the Chief of Police gets voted in as the next Mayor, chances are he'll do something about it because if one person knows the Edmonton Remand is just too damn full, it's him.

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# Watching for ways to end self-destructive behavior

by Malcolm McColl

The next day they arrived in Vancouver. They met Jason Burnstick at the



Steve Hurley runs Blue Lobster Consulting, a company that specializes in workshops on bully prevention, drug and alcohol abuse prevention, self-esteem, and self-defense. Hurley was a professional wrestler for 15 years and for the past eight years, he has delivered specialized workshops from the Queen Charlottes to the Maritimes.

"I wrestled across Canada and internationally, including the U.S.A. and some time in Asia," said Hurley who turned pro after wrestling as an amateur during junior high and high school. "I turned pro at age 17 in Calgary. It took me around the world," he added. The touring started slower than jet speed, mind you. "I broke in with Tony Candello in Winnipeg. I recall a 54-hour bus ride all the way to Thompson, Manitoba, and Oxford House."

Hurley has been staging shows in First Nation communities since 1987. He began the workshops eight years ago. "At first I worked within a full production wrestling show, including p.a., lights, and the ring," he explained. The workshops were extras that he added. Hurley decided wrestling was a world apart from the messages he delivered on bully prevention, on drug and alcohol or other substance abuses and in 2002, the time had come to make the workshops his professional priority.

Hurley comes to a community and works with anyone from ten to 70 youth. "I worked in northern B.C. this summer," he said. "We did self-esteem, and confidence building in a number communities. I work a lot with hockey players. I offer extra curricular physical education training as well as bully prevention. The main purpose in my life is to stop self-destructing kids." He has heard gratitude from communities where kids eliminate cigarettes, alcohol, and solvents from their activities.

Hurley draws on personal experience to communicate the changes required in lifestyle. "I had a drug and alcohol recovery of my own," noted Hurley, "and I was bullied in my youth." At the same time, "all aspects of the workshops are important," he added. "I offer a Healthy Living Workshop, I have a Safe Summer Survival workshop and I teach another workshop called Negative Effects of Playground Wrestling."

It comes down to respecting yourself and then respecting others. "My philosophy is that two people bring a child into the world but a community does the raising. In bully prevention, for example, I teach the signs and symptoms of bullying, parent watch, and guidelines for controlling the behavior. I teach why bullies target certain kids." He leaves the community with the skills to develop an anti-bully campaign. (See display ad on this page.)

Ron A. Mitchell works with youth in the Wetsu'wetin community of Moricetown, B.C. This summer he ran a junket of Moricetown kids to Vancouver for a Reality Walk in the Downtown Eastside. "We took nine youth ages 11 to 18 for a tour of the DES of Vancouver," said Mitchell. "We made a couple of stops on the way. We stopped in Prince George at the Native Friendship Centre. They presented their youth programs. The centre has a lot of different departments, dealing with everything from street kids to addiction counseling."

In the evening they drove to Williams Lake and were received at the Nenquanni Treatment Centre.

Vancouver Indian Friendship Centre who organized a dinner for the road-weary group. "I was amazed at the kids," said Mitchell. "They were beat from traveling and meeting so much. Yet they all listened closely to the discussions and the ideas that Jason presented to the group. It was interesting for everyone, especially a couple of kids who had never been to a city before."

Reality came the next morning on the tour conducted by Maurice Bates, former Native Liaison Officer with the Vancouver City Police. "First he gave a background of what to expect," said Mitchell. "He cautioned the kids to keep their distance and silence, to stay away from personal contacts, and to make no connections with street people. He warned about 'recruiters' who target youth for exploitation. He warned about discarded needles and he gave the kids a picture of what they might see on the walk."

Mitchell said that the Reality Walk exposed them to people suffering all kinds of drug-added conditions. They witnessed cocaine psychosis, "people digging at concrete poles, pathetically engrossed so they never noticed the kids." The kids also saw tiny coloured plastic packets that are discarded after the contents are consumed. They saw a couple of homemade beds, young and old addicts, and since the exercise of drug addiction in the DES is literally shameless, "Maurice, who has been doing this tour for years, maneuvered the kids to witness a person shooting up in an alley."

It was a useful exercise, said Mitchell for the Moricetown group walked away with a keen appreciation for their quality of life in the great northwest. One of the group expressed unexpected empathy,

"These are our people," noting the high concentration of First Nation people languishing in the DES. The group spent the evening digesting the day.

The next morning the Moricetown group met two street kids at the Youth Action Centre of VIFC. "They shared what street life was like and talked about how they ended up there, drug running, prostitution, getting low in life." Explained Mitchell, "One of the youth was a 23 year old with a 7-year-old motherless son. The mother died on drugs."

Elders offered other discussions regarding the importance of culture and language to maintaining a person's identity. Neither Mitchell nor the VIFC would let the tour end on anything but a high note. They attended a Wednesday night drumming and dancing event before heading back to Highway 16 West.

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# Wellness centre programs are well received in Hobbema

by John Copley

The Family Wellness Centre that administers community health needs to the four First Nations communities (Samson, Ermineskin, Montana, Louis Bull) at Hobbema, Alberta, is one of the many Aboriginal health centres across Canada to partner with the federally administered, National Native Alcohol and Drug Addictions Program (NNADAP). As a consequence the Family Wellness Centre is also one of the partners in the National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation. The partnership, a working alliance between Health Canada and the Foundation, was initiated to ensure that there was sufficient follow-up to the NNADAP Renewal Agreement.

"The partnership," explained the Family Wellness Centre's NNADAP Program Manager, Theresa Bull, "combines the knowledge and experience of First Nations and Inuit Addictions workers with Health Canada's resources to jointly ensure that the NNADAP National Review Recommendations are implemented."

Bull, a member of the Ermineskin Band, took over as manager of the Centre's NNADAP Program in August 2002. Before assuming the role, she spent several years working within the Tribal Council's administration. She returned to school and earned the qualifications she

needed to qualify for the position.

"I went back to school," she chuckled, in a recent interview "I didn't know if I could make it because I'd been out for a long time, but it was quite enjoyable. I



ON-Symphony

went to Grant McEwan Community College and successfully completed a course in mental health studies. In April 2002 I began working at the Wellness Centre as a liaison person; four months later I was managing the program."

And it's a program that's working.

"We're making good progress," assured Bull, who said the community is very supportive of the Family Wellness Centre and quite involved in its numerous undertakings. The centre offers a variety of self-help initiatives and on-going programs and often involves itself in outside initiatives designed to bring better awareness and viable program ideas back home.

"Our information strategy is both community-based and school-based," explained Bull, "and as a result the outside resources, programs and initiatives that we utilize play an important role in the outcome of our community-based programs. Our scope is as wide as the problems we face, and our involvement with the

RCMP's street drugs initiatives, our participation in a suicide prevention program offered by a group from Arizona and other such ventures strengthen the issues we address on a daily basis."

Included on that list of issues are topics that deal with such things as getting a grip on gambling and drug and alcohol addiction problems. Another is stressing the important role that culture, tradition and spirituality play in helping to deal with personal issues.

"Suicide awareness, grief recovery, parenting, Cree roles and responsibilities - every one of our programs is based on cultural awareness - identifying our roots, honouring our value system - understanding the ideals and the importance of responsible parenting," explained Bull. "The objectives of the NNADAP Program begin by offering a safe and supportive environment in which participants can enhance their healing awareness. The next is to create an awareness of past and contemporary issues that affect our well-being as individuals and as a community. We take an holistic approach to self-healing by utilizing the many tools, including several respected community Elders, at our disposal. One of our key objectives is to teach people how to stay in the process of recovery once they have found their way."

The Family Wellness Centre also educates program participants on the four main topics of well-being: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual peace.

"Of course," added Theresa Bull, "we also create an awareness among our participants about all of the agencies, people, materials and other resources that are available to aid in their recovery efforts."

The Family Wellness Centre is a beautifully designed facility that boasts more than 1000 square metres of floor space. The design, conceived from a plan that focused on functional requirements, is an architectural complement to the buildings around it. The centre's interior includes a multipurpose room: community room (with fireplace), offices, boardroom, family room, resource centre, and group room.

The National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation membership is made up of representatives from the Pacific, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, NWT, Nunavut, Quebec, and Atlantic regions. One youth, one Elder and one member of the Youth Solvent Abuse Treatment Centers round out the group.

For more information about the Hobbema Family Wellness Centre call (780) 585-2219 or fax (780) 585-2665.

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It was that same spirit that in 1973 inspired a dedicated group of people to establish Poundmaker's Lodge, an addictions treatment centre based on the principles of the medicine wheel. The program's goal is help people struggling with addictions restore balance to all four components of their lives: mental, physical, emotional and spiritual.

"We combine traditional teachings with other treatment modalities to help clients explore the root causes of their addictive behavior," explained Executive Director Leona Carter. "Once they understand what's behind that behaviour then they can begin to heal."

Poundmaker's Lodge began as a 14-bed facility in a small house in downtown Edmonton but quickly grew. It was moved to the site of the former Edmonton Indian Residential School just outside of St. Albert

and in 1984 a brand-new 54-bed facility was built on the same site.

The organization now has three facilities: its main office and adult treatment centre in St. Albert, an adolescent treatment centre in St. Paul and an outreach office in downtown Edmonton. In 2000 the name was officially changed to Poundmaker's Lodge Treatment Centres to reflect this. PLTC has gained an international reputation for innovative programming geared to helping Indigenous people overcome the effects of addiction. Groups from around the globe have studied the organization's methods and applied them to programs in their own countries.

While Aboriginal traditions, culture and spirituality form the basis of all programming, the principles are universal. Clients are welcomed from all cultures, traditions and faiths. This year marks PLTC's 30th anniversary. Over the years thousands of people have been helped along the path healing.

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# Dealing with the realities of addictions

by Dan Reist

Problem substance use affects all societies, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike. The economic, social, and health costs are enormous. More and more, the effectiveness of current responses is being questioned. People are open to consider new options. Governments around the world are seeking to find effective ways to deal with problem substance use.

Human beings have ingested plant substances for their psychoactive properties throughout recorded history. As long as people have used these substances, the potential for problem use has been recognized.

Traditional societies developed a range of social control mechanisms to limit the potential for harm. Hallucinogens, like peyote used by some Native American peoples, have often been absorbed into the realm of the sacred and their use controlled by ritual. Other substances, like alcohol in Ancient Near Eastern cultures, had socially approved restrictions related to time and amount.

Bruce Alexander, of Simon Fraser University, claims that addiction has changed "from being a nuisance in the ancient world to a steadily growing menace." He argues that Western societies' "mass-produced" addictions because they suppress cultural traditions that contribute to "psychosocial integration." Clan loyalties, village responsibilities, family obligations, and religious values all distort the laws of supply and demand that drive our free market economy and are therefore suppressed. The result, he argues, is growing addiction that is becoming "the general condition in western society."

If Alexander is correct, in order to address the grow-

ing problem of addiction, we must begin to rebuild psychosocial integration. Our strategies must become more holistic. We will need to look beyond the individual to consider the social community. Preventing addictions will require more than education programs that tell young people about how bad drugs are. It will require more than providing adolescents with skills on how to say, "No!" Preventing addiction requires us to nurture healthy communities where responsible substance use is modelled and where individuals are valued and, in turn, value their roles within the community.

Treatment for addictions must be more than detoxing people from harmful substances. Treatment must focus on rebuilding the whole person within networks that contribute to what Alexander calls psychosocial integration. Treatment must help people establish social roles, commit to a system of rights and responsibilities, and take an active place in community.

Our world has changed. We cannot simply go back to the way it was. We can, however, shape the process of change.

In order to promote healthy communities, new models of integration need to be developed. Addictions cannot be addressed successfully by a single sector of society. The police cannot solve the problem. Neither can doctors, social workers, or counsellors. All of these workers can contribute to the solution within an integrated approach. There is a growing awareness that the various service delivery systems must work

together more effectively. The BC Ministry of Health Services is developing an integrated plan for mental health and addiction services. In several communities, police forces and educators are cooperating on prevention initiatives.

This kind of integration is needed but is insufficient. A truly integrated response needs to involve the social, political, and faith leaders. Our responses to challenges like addiction need to



CHRISTOPHER HARVEY CHAMBAUD. 2000.

grow out of discussions of community values and norms. To some extent this is recognized in the "Framework to Improve the Social Union for Canadians" signed by the Prime Minister and Canada's Premiers, except the Premier of Quebec, in 1999. While it is an agreement between federal, provincial, and territorial governments, it reflects the interconnected nature of health, social, and economic factors in the well being of Canadians. This broad understanding of well-being can hopefully encourage dialogue within the community at large.

Aboriginal communities, with their greater emphasis on holistic and community-based approaches, have the potential to lead in this rebuilding of psychosocial integration. The issue of addiction can be addressed within the debates over self-government and the provision of services to Aboriginal people. But dealing with addictions is more than providing treatment centres and prevention programs. It means building healthy communities in which individuals are connected and services are available that nurture the human spirit.

Dan Reist is President of the Kaiser Foundation and can be contacted at dreist@kaiserfoundation.ca



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# For a career in health care call Northern Lakes College

by John Copley

Are you considering a career in health care? If so, there's an opportunity waiting for you in Slave Lake or at one of the many other Northern Lakes College campus locations throughout North Central Alberta. In fact, if you act quickly you might be able to make the deadline for the next Practical Nurse Program (PNP), which gets underway at the Athabasca, Barrhead, Grande Prairie, Grouard, Peace River, and Slave Lake locations on January 5, 2004.

"Practical nurses are part of the medical team that works with individuals and groups in our communities toward achieving health and well-being," said Julia Melynk, Director, University Studies. "The Practical Nurse Program at Northern Lakes College,

approved by the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta, follows a competency-based curriculum that involves both classroom and practical experiences." PNP students, added Melynk, can expect to develop professional knowledge, skills and attitudes in areas that include anatomy and physiology, nursing science, interpersonal and therapeutic communications, nutrition, pathophysiology, pharmacology, mental health, community health and assessment.

"Upon successful completion of the Practical Nurse Program and the Canadian Practical Nurse Registration Exam," said Melynk, "graduates are eligible to become licensed through the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta."

The PNP program is also transferable to either Bow Valley College or Norquest College and Licensed Practical Nurses can receive advanced credit to continue their study toward completion of a number of degree programs from various degree granting institutions, including the University of Alberta and Athabasca University.

The current year's class got underway on January 6, 2003 at Northern Lakes' Athabasca, Fort Vermilion, Grouard, Grande Prairie, Manning, Peace River and Slave Lake Campuses. It will end on February 27, 2004. The PNP program that gets underway at the beginning of 2004 ends in May, 2005.

To join the PNP program at Northern Lakes College applicants must be at least 18 years of age, have specified credits in English 30 or English 33, Math 20 or 23 or Pure Math 20 or Applied Math 20 and Biology 30. Applicants are also required to hold a current Standard First Aid and CPR Basic Rescuer (Level C or 3) certificate, demonstrate good physical and emotional health, speak fluent English, and present a criminal record check upon request.

The Practical Nurse Program is delivered through a mix of distributed delivery strategies that include computer and video conferences, self-directed study, instructor led face-to-face classes, telephone tutorials and clinical practicum.

"This distributed delivery method," explained Julia Melynk, "allows our students to remain in, or as close to, their home communities as possible while they pursue their educational goals. However, students in the program may have to move to other communities for a short period of time to meet the obligations of their clinical practicum."

As with any college, Northern Lakes has an application process and sometimes it takes

longer than one expects to complete the process. That's why college administrators say "the earlier you get your application in, the better your chances at meeting the necessary deadlines."

If you can meet the high school requirements, begin your application process by submitting an application form to the Office of the Registrar and attach a photocopy of your CPR certificate, or note the date you will be attending a CPR course. Once the application has been received by the college you'll get an acknowledgement letter, a medical questionnaire, an immunization form that you use to check your records and update your immunizations, brochures on the college and a criminal record check form. The latter is important, because some people with criminal records may not be able to meet the requirements of the mandatory prelicensing and licensure requirements of the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta.

Once you have returned the completed package to the College you'll receive a letter of acceptance and a package that will include your registration information. Northern Lakes College has earned a solid reputation over the past 33 years for the outstanding work they have done in preparing northern Albertans for both the classroom and the workplace while at the same time maintaining respect for the cultures and the needs of the communities.

"Northern Lakes College," assured Julia Melynk, "accomplishes its mission statement by providing quality educational programs and services which enable adults to continue their education, to improve their employment opportunities, and to enhance their quality of life."

The College is recognized as a first-choice community college with the most accessible programs and services in the province.

Though the Northern Lakes College name wasn't launched until 1999, the institute's history goes back to 1970, when Education Technicians were trained at the Alberta Vocational Centre, Grouard. These technicians, each a student of Native ancestry, were preparing themselves to instruct in adult basic education courses in the old CVC (Community Vocational Centres) service areas. At the time, the Grouard campus also had an upgrading program as well as several vocational programs. By 1974 26 CVC's dotted the map of north central Alberta.

Today Northern Lakes College continues to operate in 26 northern communities and employs more than 275 staff members. Both the Community Education Committee and their Council remain integral to the College. Partnerships established with local First Nations and Metis Settlements, business and industry and other educational institutions continue to flourish and allow the College to forge ahead with new ideas.

Applications can be sent to either the Slave Lake or Grouard campuses or to any of the campuses listed on the College's website. The Slave Lake phone number is (780) 849-8600 and Grouard's is 780-751-3200.

Questions about any of the programs at Northern Lakes College can be directed to Client Services at 1-866-652-3456 or email [info@yourfuture.ab.ca](mailto:info@yourfuture.ab.ca). The Northern Lakes College website is [www.northern-lakescollege.ca](http://www.northern-lakescollege.ca).

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# AutoSkill education - part 2

by John Copley

Last month we introduced our readers to Eric MacInnis and the AutoSkill International Inc. software he is marketing to schools, school boards, adult education centres and First Nation communities throughout western and northern Canada.

MacInnis, a former teacher with a Masters Degree in Education, is the owner of Edu-Skills Services Inc. His company markets Academy of Reading, an exciting software resource that is helping to increase the reading competencies of children by two or more grade levels after only 25 hours of training.

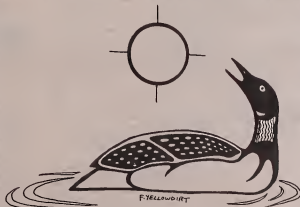
AutoSkill International is a recognized leader in the development of educational software products that work. As emphasized last month, Academy of Reading software is well established as a powerful and effective learning resource and has been introduced into more than 4,000 North American schools. Academy of Reading has won an impressive array of prestigious awards including the Media and Methods Magazine Awards Portfolio, Curriculum Administrator Top 100 Products Award, Orion Dyslexia Society Award and the Al Maresh Award from the International Corrections Association and the Canadian Council for Exceptional Children Award.

"The AutoSkill reading solution incorporated into Academy of Reading software," explained MacInnis, "has evolved over two decades and it shows!" Academy of Reading software has proven itself to be a winner with teachers, children, parents and school districts and this is the perfect time for AutoSkill to have made Academy of Math software available to help students in Mathematics."

Acquiring Math competencies is a complex and time-consuming process that many students find difficult.

"Academy of Math," stated MacInnis, "breaks down mathematical concepts into manageable sub-skills across the grades and trains students to ever-increasing levels of proficiency while moving them forward at their own rates within an individualized instructional program. This structured approach is founded

on three distinct principles: it employs a task-analytic approach to mathematics learning; it is based on practice-makes-perfect philosophy and it incorporates a mastery-learning approach complete with positive and instructional feedback to encourage and maintain student motivation. The program develops mathematical proficiency by focusing on conceptual understanding, computational fluency and strategic competence across ten mathematical strand areas."



To ensure that teachers are familiar enough with these software resources to be fully successful, it is required that schools host a one day teacher-training session. Just as the AutoSkill software programs are well-suited to the students they assist, staff in-service workshops help teachers to maximize their effectiveness in the use of these software products.

"Of course," explained MacInnis, "the program will only be as effective as those who teach it. School staff must have a good working knowledge of each version before they can use it effectively and it is not surprising that the benefit to each student is maximized when the program is taught by someone who fully understands it. It is

always interesting to visit the sites where the software will be used and work for a day with the staff. After one of these workshops, staff should be ready to begin using either or both software versions the next day."

Both Academy of Reading and Academy of Math are designed to help students to experience success. Instant and positive feedback, student awards, printable certificates and congratulatory video clips can all act as student motivators. Teacher introduced motivational strategies and rewards are encouraged to supplement those built into Academy of Math. As MacInnis states and most teachers know first hand, "One of the keys to successful learning is a high level of student motivation and with this part of the educational equation present, students will learn to the best of their abilities."

AutoSkill International Inc. recommends that students spend three to five, 20 to 30 minute sessions per week training in one or both of these software versions for maximum effectiveness by subject area. However, these numbers are a guideline and while 20 minute sessions may be best for younger students, high-schoolers and adult learners may be able to train for 45 minutes or more.

Trevor Cardinal, a teacher at the Amisk School on the Beaver Lake First Nation called Academy of Reading, "the best and most positively progressive" reading program he's ever seen. His grade 4 and 5 kids not only enjoyed working with the program, their reading picked up two grades levels in just a few weeks.

"The children took to it, they enjoy it and they learn because of it," assured Cardinal, who said he'd be looking into the Academy of Math program as well. "One thing is certain," said Cardinal, "like most opportunities you'll only get out of the program what you put into it. But with this program, when you work with it on a regular basis, the results are particularly impressive."

Eric MacInnis welcomes inquiries from schools, school districts and institutions interested in learning more about the AutoSkill educational software. Call him at (403) 844-8490 for more information.



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# FNTI prepares students for successful future

by John Copley

An important education initiative launched jointly in 1999 by the Mohawk Nations, First Nations Technical Institute (FNTI) and Ryerson Polytechnic University (RPU) will see its first graduates complete their fourth year of classes at the end of the current school year. The initiative, a new Public Administration Degree Program, supports and preserves FNTI's fundamental learner-centered, culturally appropriate principle of education.

"These principles," explained FNTI Marketing Manager, Dawn Brant, "support learners in ways that are innovative, adaptive and flexible and are at the forefront of the Institute's mission. This initiative has enabled the Institute to expand its post-secondary program platform into the Public Administration area, to establish a partnership with Ryerson University which may lead to further joint-ventures, and to address a critical need for Aboriginal people in the enhancement of self-determination."

The initiative provides learning and academic accreditation to First Nations administrators (and administrators of other Native organizations) to manage effectively and to gain control over their economic futures.

"The Public Administration program," she continued, "is set up in three separate levels of learning. Student participants can earn a Certificate after eight one-semester courses, progress to an Advanced Certificate after another eight courses, and finally graduate with a Bachelor of Applied Arts (Public Administration) Degree after a final 17 courses (if eligible for practicum)."

Students can either conclude or continue their studies following completion of each level. The program

was established jointly in 1999 by FNTI, RPU, and a Program Management Committee comprised of First Nations administrators and executives. This has ensured the program is culturally appropriate and current for First Nations governments.

Because the current year's program got underway at the beginning of September, it's too late to join the class now, but Brant suggests that those interested in participating next year get their applications in early.

"The process can take some time to complete," she said, recommending that people interested in taking the program, "get through the initial stages of the application process as soon as possible to ensure that everything is complete" before the registration deadline for the 2004 school year.

The Public Administration Program (PAP) is designed to meet the needs of current and future First Nations administrators, and the needs of executive personnel in all provincial and federal Native organizations.

"Specifically," remarked Brant, "successful completion of the program will provide recognition and accreditation for those executive personnel who already have substantial experience (through prior learning assessment). The program will also provide professional development for those personnel with limited experience, who are looking to enhance their current skills."

Finally, she added, the PAP will "provide the best forum for young adults in First Nations communities who will be the leaders of tomorrow. This will foster internal capacity building and ensure that First Nations communities remain in control of their own futures."

The First Nations Technical Institute, established in 1995, is another progressive endeavour of the Tyendinaga Mohawk. Among others, key FNTI studies programs include the Aboriginal Media Program, the Aviation Diploma Program and the Indigenous Health Workers Program.

"The three-year post-secondary Aboriginal Media program leads to a diploma in Journalism-Aboriginal Profile from Humber College," explained Brant. "Upon completion of the program, learners will also receive a certificate in specialized Aboriginal Media Studies from FNTI."

The program is delivered through 15 two-week on-site sessions and industry work placements over a three year period. The sessions are kept short so that learners don't have to be away from their families and communities for long periods of time. When learners are not in session, employment placements offer industry work experience in various media fields.

"As with all FNTI programs," added Brant, "the



CHRISTOPHER HUFFY, CANADA BEE #3

training is rooted in Aboriginal learning styles and culture and the facilitators are industry media professionals."

The three year, post secondary Aviation Diploma Program is the only aviation program in North America designed to prepare Aboriginal students as professional pilots. "Our students graduate as professionally qualified commercial pilots with a joint diploma from FNTI and Canadore College. Graduates of the Aviation Diploma Program may enjoy a career as either an airline pilot, charter pilot, float pilot, corporate pilot, or flight instructor. Graduates can also involve themselves in other related career opportunities in the aviation industry such as owner/operator of their own charter company and airport management positions."

Many FNTI graduates are already enjoying a career in the aviation industry in positions that include everything from airline pilots to charter service owners.

"The Indigenous Health Practitioner program," concluded Brant, "explores Indigenous knowledge and philosophies as they relate to human health and the natural environment. The program is rooted in Indigenous knowledge and exposes First Nations health professionals to cultural teachings which broaden their understanding about health, health care and environmental and human health issues facing First Nations communities."

This one year certificate program provides the First Nations health professional with the opportunity to acquire new skills and to understand and appreciate how cultural knowledge can be applied in resolving health issues facing First Nations communities, while creating opportunities for enrichment of their own personal cultural knowledge.

Even if you've been out of school for years, it's still possible to participate in one of the programs offered at FNTI.

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## Book Review

## Accounting for Genocide

## Canada's Bureaucratic Assault on Aboriginal People

published by Fernwood Publishing & Zed Books  
by Dean Neu and Richard Therrien  
ISBN: 1-55266-103-2 (fernwood)  
ISBN: 1-84277-189-2pb (zed)  
ISBN: 1-84277-188-4hb (zed)  
review by John Copley

If there's ever been a book that offers an accurate account of the rationalization that European governments utilized when they sailed their ships across the world's oceans, I've just read it - and you should too. It's called *Accounting for Genocide: Canada's Bureaucratic Assault on Aboriginal People*. It's not pretty, it's not subtle, it's not for the faint of heart, but it is about as in-depth as a 190 page book can get on a subject as involved as human dignity. Authors David Neu and Richard Therrien liken the tactics of Canada's early governments to those of Hitler's Germany, and balance some of the profound human similarities between North America's Indigenous populations and the Jews of 1930s Europe. They also describe in some detail how Canada's governments devised a system where the only hope for a better day for the country's original citizens, is that which is doled out by the government.

*Accounting for Genocide* doesn't deal with a new or unfamiliar topic to Canadians, but the authors do address the suffering of Canada's Indigenous populations in a script that is as fresh and stirring as it is pointed and unapologetic.

"In much the same way that the Third Reich found a solution to the 'Jewish problem'," say the authors, "Ottawa applied its bureaucratic muscle to the 'Indian problem'."

The circumstances were different but the end results similar. More than 10,000,000 Aboriginal people died in North America as a result of colonization and though the numbers who perished in Canada are substantially less than those who died in America, neither government was willing to do anything but control or kill the population that lay before them as they marched across the frontier looking for prime lands to farm, the prettiest scenery and the best location to begin building new homes for themselves. Today the governments, the religions and the big businesses remain intact, just as they were before they ever ventured to the New World. Today much of the goods and many of the dollars generated in Canada are still finding their way overseas to England, Holland, France

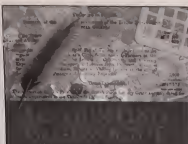
and other nations whose money and beliefs helped in the settlement of Canada three centuries ago. By the same token, the First Nations, the Inuit and particularly the Metis in Canada, have little - no state to call their own, no full entitlement to any landbase, no sub-surface rights, no exclusive hunting, trapping or gathering areas, nothing but government hand-outs and blatant stereotyping.

Assimilation, say the authors, is similar to extermination, it's just not as immediately final.

"Different in degree and type of violence," write Neu and Therrien, "assimilation (extermination of a culture) brought about the same attitude and intent. Canadian Indian policy may not have been as overt or concentrated as the Holocaust would prove to be - but it was nonetheless violent."

Of course, as the authors point out in their book, assimilation wasn't the goal of one man or one government. Instead it was a concerted effort of many government bureaucrats and business leaders who saw a way to total ownership of Canada regardless of those who lived here already. Readers shouldn't be surprised by this, just angry. Angry that our previous governments failed miserably when it came to protecting human rights and dignities and angry that the current system of government isn't much better. After all, it was just a little more than a century ago when British soldiers delivered blankets laden with smallpox virus to First Nation encampments, and it's been less time than that since whole communities starved to death because food that was promised for winter, never arrived.

*Accounting for Genocide: Canada's Bureaucratic Assault on Aboriginal People*, details many cases of ruthlessness and cunning on the part of Canada's previous governments. The authors have put a



Canada's Bureaucratic Assault on Aboriginal People



pompous face on the Canadian political community, and they haven't squared any feelings in doing so. This book is a must read for every Canadian who wants a better understanding, a truer understanding, of Canada's past. It's all well to talk about our "proud" history and the "great achievements" made by Canadians, but when it comes to the treatment of Canada's Indigenous peoples, there is no pride in Canada, for our governments continue to strike out.

Dean Neu is the Future Fund Professor of Accounting at the University of Calgary's Haskayne School of Business. Richard Therrien is a researcher, cultural worker, editor, filmmaker, ghost-writer and landscape labourer.

Buy their book.

*Accounting for Genocide: Canada's Bureaucratic Assault on Aboriginal People*. You'll discover a whole new truth between its pages, one that will have you questioning the ignorance of our past leadership and wondering, "where do we go from here?"

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**185 LB DIVISION:** Dione Groves of Chetwynd, BC defeated Reg Lizotte of Grande Prairie, AB.

**HEAVYWEIGHT DIVISION:** Colin Cowie of Rainbow Lake, AB defeated Ken Glenger of Sexsmith, AB.

**YOUTH EXHIBITION MATCH** between Trent Annett (9) of Nanaimo, BC and Kipp Wanihadi (10) of Horse Lake, BC.

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This event was very successful with 30 fights in the evening and participants coming from Horse Lake, Athabasca, High Prairie, Edmonton, Pelly Prairie, Rainbow Lake, Grande Prairie, Dawson Creek, and Chetwynd.

#### NOTABLE MENTIONS TO:

Corey Augustine who traveled from Big Cove, New Brunswick, Chad Szauner from Elkose, Saskatchewan, Andrew Linklater from Victoria, BC, Mik E. Blumke from Vancouver, BC, and Allan McDonald from Sydney, Nova Scotia. These tuff guys all travelled great distances, and did not win.



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# Reclaim your Family

by Ken Noster

Institutional places of learning (schools) are a relatively recent development, less than two-hundred years old. Before that, most education was handled within the family. The family is the basic element of every culture. Canadian culture today is demonstrating the results of weakening family ties, and the

Canadian Native culture demonstrates the same affliction. The multitude of personal tragedies, often seen in the form of conflict and substance abuse can be traced directly back to the person's socialization during childhood. Conversely, most recipes for success are also developed in childhood. Schooling at home provides a means of socializing our children well.

Some people say, "My child must live in the 'real world' in order to learn to deal with life."

The first thing this statement does is presume family life is not the real world. This is a serious presumption and perhaps one more way in which the family is being attacked, even from within. The family is in fact a microcosm of the nation. Being the primary element of society, it is what drives and governs that society. For example, if families have strong moral codes, the nation will have a strong moral code; if families focus upon selfless service to others, the nations will focus on service; if the families are violent, the nation will be violent. Our nation today is confused because many of our families are confused. If you wish to have your children grow up in the real world, make your family real.

I realize that when some people make the above statement, they mean they want their children to be able to deal with the tough situations that will come up in life by not shielding them from those situations now. Frankly, there is a reason children spend the first 18 years of their lives under the wing of their parents. During this period they are developing, and like a young plant they can be easily harmed. The mind and heart of a child cannot take the constant abuse that is even difficult for an adult to handle. The experiences of a child are of overwhelming consequences for life. If you were to counsel troubled 40 and 50 year old people you would find that virtually all of their problems stem from experiences they had as children. Do not underestimate the effects the "real world" is having upon children.

Just as a young plant does best if started in a greenhouse, then set outside for short periods of time, but then drawn back into the protection of the greenhouse; a home schooled child does best even the security of

*Continued on Page 35*

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# Oil & Gas Safety

## Alcohol and the workplace: a bad mix

by Judy Hanson, Canadian Petroleum Safety Council

The issues of alcohol and drug abuse are not new to the workplace or the oil and gas industry. As early as the 18th century on duty soldiers were given daily rations of rum or brandy. In the 60s and 70s illicit drugs became popular and drug use crept into the workplace. In the oilpatch it has not been uncommon for liquor to be readily available on site and for deals to be made over liquid lunches. What is the consequence? In 1999 the International Labour Organization quoted studies showing that 20 to 25 percent of workplace accidents and up to 30 percent of work-related deaths are linked to drugs and alcohol.

The reasons for drug and alcohol abuse are as many as there are types of drugs and brands of liquor. Some

of the most common are long work hours, job and personal stress and isolation from family. Studies of male-dominated occupations have shown male workers are prone to use drinking to build solidarity and show conformity to a group. It is not difficult to attach all of these influences to life in the oilpatch. Since it is estimated that more than 70 percent of substance abusers hold jobs, it is likely one worker, if not more, will be at work "under the influence" and compromising workplace safety.

Drug and alcohol abuse in the workplace is a lose-lose-lose situation. For workers, it can result in injury or death. When impaired judgment is used around high pressures and explosive environments, public safety as well as employee safety is jeopardized. For employers it can lead to reduced profits due to higher rates of accidents, lower productivity and increased insurance costs.

It has become clear that workplace awareness coupled with greater



responsibility among the workforce, can be important factors in reducing the abuse of drugs and alcohol. Many companies have instituted drug and alcohol policies and awareness programs. Another tool companies can use are Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs). EAPs offer confidential consultation and information services to employees and their immediate families for personal problems, including substance abuse and situations that can lead to substance abuse. For more information on EAPs, contact the Labour Branch of Human Resources Development Canada. For more information on the Canadian Petroleum Safety Council, please visit our website at [www.psc.ca](http://www.psc.ca).

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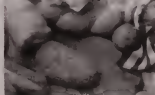
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Bruce Simpson  
President

# Deh Cho Safety offers solutions for the north

by John Copley

No matter what industry you work for or community you live in, no matter who you are, safety is your first concern - or at least it should be. High insurance premiums, needless injuries, uncertainty in dangerous situations all point to the need for safety. And when you are living or working in the remoteness of Canada's northern frontiers, the isolation and lack of services adds a new dimension of importance to the equation. That's why when you're living in the north, say in an area such as Norman Wells, Fort Good Hope, Colville Lake, Fort Franklin or Port Radium, it's nice to have someone like Al Kuyten around. He's the owner and operator of Deh Cho Safety Services and Training, a two year old venture that specializes in bringing safety solutions to northern communities and companies.

"The last thing anyone wants to do," said Kuyten, a former oil patch worker with years of experience and numerous safety instructor course diplomas in his repertoire, "is to look back after an accident or other preventable mishap, and say, if only I'd realized..."

The Norman Wells, N.W.T.-based, Deh Cho Safety Services and Training (DCSST) offers a lengthy list of safety and other courses for northern businesses and communities and for a wide range of oilfield, mining, exploration and other enterprises working in Canada's north. Northern communities seeking advice on anything from designing a school or community safety program, to preparing a full scale defense against natural disasters are called to Deh Cho Safety for a free consultation. Likewise for companies who want to ensure that their employees are up to speed on safety tips and techniques.

Working with renowned business professionals that include the Nisku-based, Petroleum Industry Training School (PITS) and the Strathmore, Alberta-based, Global Training Centre, DCSST offers both the Industrial Firefighting Level I and Level II courses as well as a Fire Service Instructor's course, both of which come with student manuals, classroom training and practical on-the-job experience. Government inspectors supervise or oversee the NFPA Fire Training Course and participants are required to attend a Fire Training School, such as PITS.

"We offer the WHMIS, TDG and H2S ALIVE courses as well as a gas testing and respiratory protection course," said Kuyten, who also conducts drug test

screening for companies who utilize the practice. Many companies check their employees before hiring them and then randomly in the field afterwards.

Basic Pre-Entry Confined Space and Basic Confined Space Rescue are two of Deh Cho's specialized training courses. Other courses include CPR, Standard First Aid and Emergency Care as well as both the basic and advanced Marine First Aid training.

"Of course we also offer specialty training courses to both communities and companies and we have a corporate training package as well," explained Kuyten. Communities have different needs and different concerns but most are interested in the Level A safety watch course, audits and inspections, emergency response preparedness and overall community safety.

"Deh Cho Safety and Training," explained Kuyten, "works with community and business leaders and is able to develop specific and/or specialized programs to meet the needs of those clients. Safety audits, inspections, investigations, safety program development and management - we offer a well-rounded package of services that are not only important in this part of the country, but practical and competitively priced as well."

If your company or community hasn't yet called on Deh Cho Safety and Training to sit down and discuss your particular needs, perhaps now is the time to do it. Cold weather is just around the corner, and Al Kuyten is right, it is better to be safe than sorry.

For more information about how you can utilize Deh Cho's training initiatives and/or address the safety issues in your community, call him at (867) 587-4123 or send a fax to (867) 587-4124. Email can be directed to [dehchosafety@hotmail.com](mailto:dehchosafety@hotmail.com).

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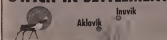
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# Thorough safety training in the work force

by Malcolm McColl

The Workers' Compensation Board of B.C. covers over 112,000 registered employers and 1.3 million workers. WCB began regulating worker safety in B.C. in 1917. A close facsimile exists in relation to governments throughout the industrialized world, and the existence of these insurance corporations stems from the industrial revolution. From the outset the Board educated workers, employers, and medical personnel about enabling legislation for worker safety, including some form of Accident Fund (or coverage) based on collective liability.

"WCB is a government-run or legislated no-fault insurance system that also provides regulations about the standards and requirements for the protection of the health and safety of workers and the occupational environment in which they work," said the website for WorkSafeBC. The WCB has overriding responsibility for worker safety. Through Certification Services, Prevention Division, the board contracts safety training to various agencies in the province.

B.J. Shute runs METS First Aid Training in North Vancouver, and when he's not teaching how to save

lives he's a lifesaver in ambulance EMS. He has been in the training business since 1997 and took over METS two years ago. "We teach courses in OH&S Levels One, Two, and Three. We teach Transportation of Dangerous Goods, and CPR," explained Shute, as well as a number of other WCB certified courses.

METS works as an agent of safety training for the WCB. "Agencies like myself train others how to instruct safety in the workplace," said Shute. WCB supplies books and provides certification. METS will do classes of 12 to 20 students. "I run the business basically on demand. I go to the workplace and deliver training on-site," he added citing one example of safety training loggers at the Mount Currie and Lillooet First Nations.

Dave Lowe works for North Eastern Occupational Rehabilitation Centre in Dawson Creek. The centre is an OH&S hub in the northeast of the province. "We've been in Dawson Creek for ten years," said Lowe. "Our outreach program began three years ago," delivering safety services to job sites in Chetwynd, Ft. Nelson, and elsewhere. "Our type of service is rehabilitation and prevention," he added.

The centre conducts physical demands analysis and risk factor analysis on job sites. The centre provides seminars on ergonomics. "We are contracted with WCB to be the designated clinic in the north east of B.C.," said Lowe. The centre is busy with the oil patch in the area. "It is a growing economic activity and it is practically year round."

Staying Alive First Aid Academy delivers safety training in the southeast of the province. Linda Bailey runs the company out of Sparwood, B.C., "I've been a first aider for 20 years and instructor for two years," she said. Staying Alive Academy is teaching up-to-date safety courses, including something brand new for B.C. and Alberta, called Emergency Medical Practitioner - Advanced, a 76 hour course in advanced occupational first aid. Bailey spent two weeks in Calgary this summer obtaining the instructor credentials for the new course.

Staying Alive teaches the Occupational First Aid required for operating industrial ambulances in the province. She trains out of new facilities with state-of-the-art safety equipment, including everything from oxygen to cervical collars, defibrillators, blood pressure and suction equipment. Then again, Staying Alive teaches the WCB-required Early Childhood Daycare program and St John's Emergency Childcare course. They travel to deliver short-term safety courses, including OH&S Level One, a basic safety primer for industrial workers.

Bailey said, "I train a wide variety of people about

safety, from young moms, to nursing programs, to fire departments." Staying Alive courses are delivered within flexible schedules in Sparwood. Bailey said a group may be willing to travel and work over a weekend on a relevant safety course, so she accommodates. She said safety careers are worth pursuing. "Somebody with Level Three Occupational Health and Safety training can reasonably expect a well-paying job in a lot of different industries."

Alpha Safety Ltd. operates safety-training programs in Fort St. John, B.C. as with many companies in the industry. "We take safety training wherever it is needed. Fort St. John is home," said Dan Wilson. "We have a training centre in 3,500 sq. ft. that offers anything to do with industrial (WCB-regulated) safety." (Level One is a one-day course, Level Two is one-week, and Level Three is two-weeks.) Wilson said, "Walmart uses the Level Two training for their safety employees."

Alpha Safety delivers WHMIS, TDG, Levels One to Three, and other industrial and work safe courses. "We do a lot of safety training around pipelines, rigs, and other oil and gas services, including courses in operating industrial ambulances. We do lots of Level One training because everybody going into the oil patch needs Basic First Aid, WHMIS, and H2S," noted Wilson. Alpha operates near a busy oil and gas sector. "We deliver courses that are provided by the Petroleum Industry Training Service," a 75 year old safety agency of the Canadian oil and gas industry.

Northwest First Aid Training Agency delivers worker safety programs in the Bulkley Valley region and up to Nisga'a Nation as well. Roger and Maureen run the OH&S company in an area with high concentrations of First Nation population, and increasing levels of First Nation economic development. "Virtually every First Nation is involved in training people in work safety, since they are subject to the regulations of the workplace," said Roger.

In the case of logging, "we train the loggers in first aid, WCB regulations, equipment checks, chainsaw safety, and bucking and falling. Every First Nation community has access to resources. For them to operate, they must abide by safe operating techniques. They have been very proactive in getting that training," said Roger. "In my experience, the First Nations indicate every attempt to abide by, and very often exceed, the standards of work safety." Roger described first aid as the number one priority of industry today. "First aid is first, then follows the other training programs," he concluded.



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# City of Lethbridge Feature

## City launches Aboriginal Employment Initiative

Lethbridge, Alberta - The City of Lethbridge, the Mayor. If you have experience to share please contact Diane Randall, Social Planner, City of

Lethbridge at 403-320-3823.

working with the Aboriginal community has launched an Aboriginal employment initiative. The Blackfoot Nation's Kainai, Blood and Piikani tribes, the Metis Association, government agencies, educators, and the business community have been invited to participate.

"The City's culture and history is strongly connected to the Native communities in the area," says Mayor Bob Tarleck. "We want to work with them to ensure that the city, and other local employers are aware of the skills and talents available among Aboriginal workers, and ensure that they have barrier-free access to the education, training and work opportunities available in Lethbridge."

A conference planned for early 2004 will bring all the stakeholders together to share information and develop an action plan to increase Aboriginal participation in the local workforce. Since we are just in the early stages of this initiative and conference planning we would appreciate learning about the experience of other communities who may have entered into a similar process," added



*Roy*

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Spend a day or a week enjoying all the things to see and do in the city of Lethbridge, or make it your home base from which to explore the world-class attractions of the surrounding region.

The city has a rich and eventful history that can be seen in many of the buildings in the downtown core, and in several major attractions.

The Fort Whoop-Up Interpretive Centre explores the history of the original whiskey-trading outpost. A reconstruction of the Fort tells the story of an era of lawlessness where Mounties, traders and Blackfoot met in Canada's last Wild West. The Fort is located in Indian Battle Park, the site of the last great battle between Native tribes in Canada.

The Six Alexander Galt Museum & Archives, which is housed in one of the city's historic buildings, has rotating exhibits highlighting culture, development, landscapes and people of Lethbridge and Southern Alberta.

From river valley habitats to urban parks, Lethbridge has taken care to preserve its natural beauty through its parks and attractions.

Experience the beauty and simplicity of the Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden, located in the heart of Henderson Lake Park. This mature four-acre oasis features elements of five traditional Japanese gardens. The central pavilion offers visitors a glimpse into Japanese culture and insight in to the details of the garden.

Other recreational opportunities available in Henderson Lake Park include a golf course, outdoor swimming pool, ball diamond, ice arena, campground and biking and walking paths.



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Helen Schuler Coulee Centre helps visitors discover the wonder of the Old Man River Valley through hands-on exhibits, interpretive programs and self-guided trails in a 200-acre nature reserve.

Visitors to the city looking for visual expressions of culture can find it at the nationally recognized Southern Alberta Art Gallery. A dynamic variety of contemporary art programs and high-quality exhibi-

Continued on Page 35

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# Lethbridge Career Centre offers free advice and services

by John Copley

Good jobs aren't always easy to find, and even if they were, you'd have to know how to apply for them, how to win the position and most important, how to keep the job once you get it. That's where the Lethbridge Aboriginal Career and Employment Centre (LACEC) comes in; their expertise and well-rounded advice can help to make your job search a positive one.

LACEC Job Developer, Jay Colter Smith, says when you need to find work but aren't sure about how to get the job you want, reach out for help - it won't cost you a dime.

"We provide a number of services designed specifically to help individuals gain the knowledge they need to prepare themselves for the workforce," he explained. "For example, our workshops provide Aboriginal clients with up-to-date information on funding resources and employment strategies. Individuals new to the workforce may be uncertain when it comes to protocol, just as those who've been on the job force for years may have a difficulty when it comes to seeking new career opportunities."

In either case, he added, LACEC has a program to fit most needs.

"Our workshops provide valuable information on such things as resume writing, job searching, writing cover letters, locating Aboriginal funding agencies and developing good interview skills," said Smith. "We can even give our clients some direction about how to go about applying for small business loans. If you are already in business for yourself, or are thinking about developing a business, we can also help to steer you in the right direction."

Whether your direction leads to the workplace or back to the classroom for high school upgrading, the LACEC should be your first stop when seeking solutions.

"Our objective, to provide employment services to the local Aboriginal population, is much more involved than it sounds," explained Smith. "Our client

assistance programs offer a variety of services that are based on the unique and personal goals of the individual. Career counselors are available and happy to work one-on-one with clients anxious to get on with both their short-term and long-term goals."

As the organization's Job Developer, it's Jay Colter Smith's responsibility to locate, secure and maintain viable employment opportunities for LACEC's clients. He begins within the City of Lethbridge but his territory is province-wide.

"At the moment," he explained, "we're concentrating our main efforts in Lethbridge and in other southern Alberta centres. In fact, if things go according to plan, we could see the development of an important Aboriginal employment conference take place here sometime in the next 18 months."

City officials recently approached LACEC administration to discuss the viability of a joint conference that would explore such things as local employment opportunities, utilizing the province's academic upgrading program to enhance job readiness and how to best form a plan that will inform and include local and regional businesses in the job strategies initiatives developed through LACEC.

"We currently offer a variety of services and programs for LACEC clients," said Smith. "but a joint conference would certainly go a long way in helping to ensure that every local business, no matter how small or how large, is aware of the potential workforce at their fingertips. By working together with local and regional companies, and with the city's support, the benefits to both the Aboriginal community and the business sector could be phenomenal. The Aboriginal community in Southern Alberta, like the rest of the province, is young and eager and anxious to work. By creating positive avenues of employment now, we help to fulfill our mandate to advocate, empower and assist Aboriginal people in

recognizing their talents so they can successfully pursue their goals. If we can meet our objectives, the challenges facing young Aboriginal people about to join the workforce will become less of a burden. When local and regional companies work together with Aboriginal job strategies programs, everyone benefits."

LACEC administers a variety of on-going programs, including a no-charge daily services venue that offers such things as free fax, photo-copies and emails, help with letter and resume writing, counseling services, self-help workshops, a resource library, computers and a job board.

"Employment counseling is conducted on a by-appointment basis," explained Smith, "and is available to all First Nations, Metis and Inuit people who apply. Employment Counseling includes such topic areas as assessments, individual action planning, life skills training, career development, labour market research, education and training and funding referrals. Our career counselors are professionally trained and are able to give direction to all types of clients, based on their needs and on their career goals."

LACEC has a new Life Skills Program about to get underway next month.

"The new Life Skills initiative," explained Smith, "will be a six month, full-time program and will operate daily from Monday through Friday until May 2004. Interested participants should contact us at the earliest opportunity because these programs usually fill up quickly."

LACEC staff can also help with your school enrollment. If you are having difficulties accessing post secondary education, need information on how to get started with your high school upgrading or would like to attend a mainstream school, call Jay Colter Smith.

"We're open from Monday through Friday, call me for more information," said Smith, "and we'll get you started on the right track."

Call (403) 328-8889 for more information.

The Lethbridge Aboriginal Career and Employment Centre works jointly and in cooperation with Treaty 7 Economic Development and Alberta Human Resources and Development.





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# Prevent Family Violence

## Family violence hurts us all!

If you know someone who is in a violent relationship, talk to them about it and offer your support. Learn about the cycle of family violence — tension, explosive incident, honeymoon phase. Talk to a local shelter or community centre about the options the abused person has. Before intervening in a domestic dispute, consider your own safety. The police are better equipped to deal with this type of volatile situation. Before reporting spousal abuse, consider the safety of the victim. If you think the abusive spouse may become more violent after being reported, ensure the victim is in a safe place. Encourage the victim to talk to a counsellor, clergy or a shelter. Reporting abuse of a child is a legal responsibility. Talk to people in your

community about family violence prevention. Ask your community or organization or church to become involved in educating people about family violence issues. Teach your children to handle conflict and anger without violence.

### If you are in an abusive relationship

Here are a few suggestions if you are trying to free yourself from a life of violence:

• **Don't underestimate the danger.**

Don't be lulled into underestimating the danger that you and your children face. Statistics and research show that the violence gets more severe over time. You could be killed.

• **Make a getaway plan.**

The violence gets worse — it never gets better. If you are not ready or able to leave the situation permanently, at least take some precautions for your own safety and the safety of your children. Have an escape plan. Whenever possible, tuck a few dollars away in a place where it won't be found, but where you can get at it. Keep a set of car keys where you can get them easily and quickly. If you can, make an arrangement with a friend or neighbour or women's shelter to pro-



vide a safe place for you or your children in an emergency.

• **Care for yourself.**

Be kind to yourself as you cope. Remember, you don't deserve to be abused. You are not responsible for another person's abusive behaviour.

• **Ask for help.**

Whether you are staying in the relationship or attempting to make it on your own, you need help. Don't be afraid to ask. If you or someone else report the crime to the police, and if there is enough evidence, the police will take charge of the legal process. Your evidence in court will be a big help. Wife assault is a crime. Often it takes the threat of prosecution or being separated from his family to make an abuser agree to get help.

• **Encourage your partner to get counselling.**

Whether or not you have been through a court process, encourage your partner to get counselling.

There are a number of Aboriginal organizations and safe homes throughout the province that can help if you or someone you know is experiencing family violence or abuse in any form.

For a complete list of community based services call (780) 482-4636.

*Family violence and abuse are community concerns. We salute the efforts of all those seeking the healing path.*

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*Family violence is a community concern. We all need to work together to stop domestic abuse*



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# Family violence just won't go away

by Ennis Morris

When Canada's Justice Minister took to the podium in Edmonton on December 4, 1998 during the eighth annual fundraising campaign to combat violence against women and children, he said that Ottawa's approach to family violence "recognizes the need for broad societal engagement. It is only by coming at the problem from a number of perspectives and directions and by working with other levels of government, women's organizations, as well as other community organizations in the private sector, that we are going to find meaningful solutions to this complex social problem."

The Minister went on to laud the approach being taken.

"This approach has helped enable progress in areas of prevention, protection and support to women and children leaving violent situations. The cornerstone of the federal government's work on family violence has been the family violence initiatives."

He was talking about three federally endorsed family violence initiatives that had been addressed during the previous decade. He said the initiatives "sought to promote the well-being of the family and to improve the ability of the criminal justice, housing and health system to help victims and stop offenders."

Seeking a goal is one thing, accomplishing it is another. What the initiatives sought has not yet materialized but the initial energy, fueled by a spate of violent family encounters that had news headlines demanding action, remains intact. You'd have a difficult time knowing that however, unless you're involved in one way or another, because there's just not enough information flowing into the home or the average workplace about the serious issues surrounding family violence. The main thrust of family violence awareness comes but once a year, during the third week of November, as if to remind the unpliant that the Christmas season isn't the right time to beat up the spouse.

The fact that family violence is as rampant as it is, however, doesn't mean that nothing is being done. It is. In fact, there have been dozens of initiatives, projects funded by the Department of Justice Canada under the Family Violence Initiative, that have been gaining solid ground in their attempt to find solutions to the family violence problem. Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, Newfoundland, Saskatchewan - almost every province and territory in the country is or has taken part in developing and/or administering family violence programs and initiatives. But the flow-of-information process is far too sluggish. The government is quick to broadcast the numbers of dollars they're spending on these initiatives but they are not so fast to part with the results of the initiatives they spend the money on. It can take years to get a printout of the facts, some-

times it never comes. The result is that family violence news is almost always bad news - nobody wants to talk about the good that is derived from the two and three and five year initiatives - unless it's about how much money is being spent. If the public can't see the good work that's taking place, if they can't get excited about what's taking place then they can't promote it, they can't get involved. And that's the key ingredient to combating family violence - involvement.

Alberta's family violence initiatives are a step-up when compared to some of the other provincial programs in Canada and now there's at least one more government in the country that's decided to do more than talk about the problem of family violence.

The Northwest Territories is about to put some meat on the bones of family violence legislation. And they got the idea from Alberta. The new law will allow police officials to quickly remove anyone from the family home who is threatening to commit or committing acts of violence. The new measure, if it passes into law next month, as most experts expect it will, will be known as the Family Violence Protection Act and will allow RCMP officers and other law enforcement officials to seek emergency protection orders from a Justice of the Peace. And the new law doesn't just apply to spousal abuse, it protects everyone in the family.

"I've been calling for this type of legislation since I first discovered that it existed elsewhere," said Françoise Lake M.L.A., Charles Dent, who has been seeking stronger measures against wife and child beaters for years.

"I first discovered this kind of legislation at a forum put on by the Seniors Society," he says. "The people running that forum were from Alberta and they talked about how this type of legislation had turned out to be important for seniors in that province."

Those who support the bill to tighten the laws are concerned that the new rules allow room for abuse. Because the person being removed from a home could spend up to a week in jail before a judge can decide his or her immediate fate, some experts have stated that there is little to stop one spouse from trying to

get rid of the other for awhile - even if no violence has taken place.

"I hope those scenarios never occur," said NWT Justice Minister Roger Allen "but if they do I'm sure the justice of the peace that serve those emergency protection orders will be able to make that judgment."

The proposed Family Violence Protection law is currently being taken into the rural communities for local hearings.



PHOTO: GARY CHRISTENSEN/STREETVIEW PHOTOGRAPHY

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# Art & Culture

## Ledger drawings of the great plains

by Jane Ash Poitras

History and the sacred are what inspired the Indian peoples of the Great Plains of North America to chronicle their lives pictorially. Drawings and etchings on cave walls, rock walls, saved for thousands of years as a large-scale, public way of marking historical events and visionary trances.

Many shamans of the past painted narrative scenes of buffalo hide robes and tipis. These paintings provided records of man's experiences and visions. Exploits of feuds or success in the hunt would be painted on their garments and shelters to valorize and memorialize their heroic deeds.

As the 19th century started, Plains Indians adopted a new, smaller scale art form for their visionary life. They began to draw on paper, using pencils, pens, crayons and paint. These new media were provided



by the incoming European exploiters and Indian agents and missionaries.

With the wave of white people flooding into the Americas, the traditional Indian art disappeared and their presence changed Plains Indian life irrevocably.

The first Native histories of those profound changes occur in the drawings made by Plains men. Ledger books used by the early traders were appropriated by Indian artists of the Great Plains and made into an archive of their personal histories and vision.

These new Indian artists drew and painted on anything they could get their hands on from butcher paper to wrapping paper to recycled stationery. They recreated them into masterpieces of art. Pencils and notebooks were considered a good trade for their pelts and medicinal herbs.

Drawings and paintings made on their new material were a continuation of their earlier records of cave and rock wall drawings. While recording personal history and visions, the Plains Indians provided an artistic bible of the profound changes occurring in indigenous life in the 19th and 20th centuries. Most important of all, these drawings on paper opened up a cultural exchange with the European invaders and visitors.

To make a work of art can be a revolutionary act, an autohistoricalgraphical act, an act of hidden resistance. It can be a way of healing one's heart, and getting it into historical times forever. The sins of the past will not go unnoticed.

Ledger drawings were drawings of revolution, oppression, sadness, despair... in other words, North American Indian Expressionism.

The beauty and mastery of the early North American Plains Indians' drawings will speak to all of their celebration to survive regardless of history's mistake and to look forward to tomorrow when their transformation works The Magic.

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# Story-Telling

## That Mountain

by Harold Sigalef

The following is Jimmy Charlie's story about That Mountain as he tells it in his own words. As Jimmy Charles says, it was a long, long time ago: before white men come to the north. Before white men bring their own spirits. Indian spirits were everywhere. In the rocks. In the trees. In the birds. In the animals. All over the places. No white spirits to bother them way back then.

My great grandpa tell me this story and he says his grandpa don't write it down because they have no pencils in those days. No paper. Just their minds to remember stories. I tell it to you now.

There was this little boy. When he born, he look like small wolf. Hairy all over. Pointed nose. Has funny green eyes. Not black eyes like Indians. So they names him Little Wolf.

When he get older, he don't want walk like us. All time, he runs around on all fours. He likes to play in bush. Sniffs ground and trees. He is patient just like wolf. He waits beside holes of mice and ground squirrels and pounces on them when they comes out. He sneaks up on birds and grabs them in his jaws. All these things he eats. Raw. Just like wolf. His mamma and papa worry about him. He gets like wolf more and more every day.

One day when grandma look after him, she fall

asleep. She old lady, you know. Goes to sleep. Alright. Little Wolf he wanders into bush. Suddenly he feels something hairy take him. He cannot see what it is. But he can feel fur. This thing he cannot see it take him into that mountain. Feels like he floating in clouds. Clouds white and soft like northern snow. He is happy inside and all over. Little Wolf thinks this okay.

When grandma wakes she no can find Little Wolf anyplaces. Everybody looks all over. Friends come and search. Look and look. Little Wolf is nowhere. No place can they find him.

Every night the wolves howl in that mountain. That mountain who talks. That mountain where strange, evil spirits live. That mountain where everybody fear. That mountain where nobody goes.

Some days mamma sees Little Wolf hiding in the bushes. When she chase him he turns into wolf. Before her eyes, he becomes wolf. She doesn't know what to think. She afraid. Maybe wolves ate Little Wolf. Maybe not. She don't know. Then, for a long time she don't see Little Wolf any-

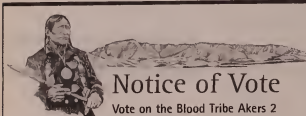


more. Mebbe a year later, she sees a big wolf. Standing in path. Looking at her. He comes near. Shows great big teeth. Snarls and growls. She real scared. Can't run. Wolf gets close

to her, she thinks mebbe he jumps on her and tear her to pieces. She so damn scared she passes out.

When she come too, she all alone. No wolf nowhere. She so scared she run like rabbit for home. She not go for walks for many moons. All the time she thinks about them wolves. But something tell her to walk in the bush again. She afraid to go but can't say no. This time she take her bow and arrow because she scared.

When she far in bush she can feel something following her. She look and look all around but see nothing. She start running. Fast as her little legs will go. That wolf rushes in front of her. She so scared she trips. That crazy wolf curls his lips and shows many big teeth and creeps closer and closer, his hair standing up on his back like wire hair brush. She know wolf is mad and is going to kill her. She screams to her spirit for strength. She still clutch bow and arrow and somehow she zing arrow into that wolf chest. I think mebbe her



## Notice of Vote

Vote on the Blood Tribe Akers 2 Claim Settlement Agreement

Ratification Vote:  
November 13, 2003  
Time:  
9:00 am until 6:00 pm  
Location:  
Senator Gladstone Hall  
Blood Reserve

Information Meeting:  
October 22, 2003  
Time:  
9:00 am until 4:00 pm  
Location:  
Senator Gladstone Hall  
Blood Reserve

And further take notice that you may vote in person at the Ratification Vote, or you may vote by mail-in ballot. To verify your address for mail-in voting call: 1-877-737-8217

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spirit help her. Wolf roll over. Wiggles for awhile. Then he dead alright.

All over herself, mamma has cold sweat. She look at that dead wolf. She look at him for a very long time. Then she can't believe what her eyes see. She hopes her eyes play tricks. Because real wolf turns into Little Wolf. Her little boy. Yup. What wuz real wolf now her dead little boy.

She one frightened woman, that mamma. She don't

know what to do. So she rush to shaman's hut for advice. Shaman say it work of evil ones in that mountain. Stay away that mountain. he say.

They don't bury Little Wolf. Shaman places him on fire so smoke take his spirit up through hole in the sky to that other world. Burn body so wolves can't get him. Indians come from all over place and put gifts on fire for the spirits. Smoke carries gifts to spirits. Make spirits happy. Take care of Little Wolf.

*Rocky/89*

## Legends stress taboos against cannibalism

by Lee White

Many stories are told in Aboriginal circles about the wehtiko, or cannibal.

In some of those stories, the wehtiko is a giant monster wearing treetsops as snowshoes whose giant strides carry him great distances across northern forests with every step.

These wehtiko are cold hearted, filthy and ugly creatures with the power to turn humans into cannibals. That power can be overcome with conjuring, and the creatures are blinded and confused by human excrement.

It is believed that these creatures become wehtiko if they are fatally wounded, then eaten by the humans they lived with.

There are many stories, some within recent memory, of humans possessed by the wehtiko spirit who express cannibalistic desires and tendencies as part of their insanity or possession.

Throughout history, hunters and trappers who roam the northern forests and sub-Arctic have reported seeing the giant wehtiko and have warned of places to avoid where they might be encountered.

Storytellers have recounted tales of both creatures and humans who have become wehtikos by eating human flesh, reinforcing strong taboos against cannibalism.

Although this transformation is said to give the possessed ones superhuman strength, the condition is so traumatic and difficult that they refuse to eat

and beg to be killed by those around them.

It is even said that sometimes humans become wehtiko merely by dreaming about the evil spirits of North and lee. When this condition occurs it can be overcome by conjuring.

While many believe the concept of wehtiko and the stories told are legends created to warn against cannibalism, there is some evidence that this form of possession — and even the giant creatures — are real.

There are written references to wehtiko in 18th century Hudson's Bay Company diaries, and belief in the existence of the giant wehtiko extends among various tribes from the Rocky Mountains to the Great Lakes, and from the sub-Arctic to the northern United States.

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When northern lights have party and wolves howl, they send strange light to top that there mountain. That light stay there. Maybe an hour or so. Mebbe until sun wakes up. Looks like fire up there.

Even today, when wolves howl, that strange light it shines on top that mountain. Nobody goes up that mountain. They say strange things up there. Sometimes peoples don't come back when they go up there. Nobody sees them again.

One day I think mebbe I go see. I'm not scared. Me brave guy. So I climb that mountain. It is long climb. I climb and climb and climb. Many time I stop for rest. Sometimes I think mebbe I never get to top.

When night come, I try sleep under tree. Many stars in sky. Northern lights all over like maybe there is big party in sky. Wolves howl and howl. Light flashes through trees like white man's flood lights. On and off they go. When they flash on I see big teeth. I scared. Too scared to run in the dark. I close my eye and shiver against big tree. I feel furry things touching me. I think mebbe the wolves are going to eat me. I don't sleep but I think I so scared I pass out. I shake so much mebbe I wear a hole in that tree.

As soon as little morning light comes through trees, howling stops and ravens call. Boy, I jumps up and runs downhill through the bush. I run straight like an arrow shot from a strong bow. Today, mebbe straight like a rifle shot down that hill. Anyways, I can feel the devil chasin' me. And I'm sure not waitin' for him to catch up. I go straight home in a real hurry like mebbe the sky is gonna fall down. I never go back that place again.

Yup. This true story. And I don't go back that mountain. Nohows.

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# LEGEND

## Wihtiko's Heartbeat

Collected and illustrated by: James Ratt  
Told by: Mary McKenzie

Some years ago, when people used to believe in the Wihtiko, we had quite a scare after we returned from a hunting trip. We had run into some bad weather and spent most of the day under a pine tree.

Because we were unable to start a fire, we decided to head back.

After we returned to camp and had turned our canoe over to dry ground, my grandfather came from his tent to see if we had got anything on our hunting trip. We told him what had happened and he told us to come over to his tent to warm up.

We had some tea and dried off. Then my grandfather told us that he had been hearing a sound all day as if someone was chopping down a tree. He thought it might be the heartbeat of a Wihtiko and we had better be prepared for the night in case it should be heading towards our camp.

I decided that I should get our Bible out and read a few chapters. That night my grandfather, my nephew and I stayed up late to see what would happen. I was sitting beside a little wood heater and my nephew sat on the other side. My grandfather was sitting by the doorway of the tent. He took a peek outside because the chopping sound became louder as the wind blew harder.



Just as my grandfather had his head all the way out, our dog Kiskanuhk decided to have a peek inside the tent. These two started each other so much that they jumped away from the doorway at the same time! This gave us all a laugh before we resumed our watch.



I became more frightened after thinking about how fast my grandfather had pulled his head away from the doorway. I was afraid to even walk outside for a few minutes, so I got out the Bible again and read a few more chapters.

My nephew said he was staying awake all night and I tried to stay awake with him. However, I fell asleep sometime during the night and woke up with a burnt forehead because we had kept the stove going to keep warm.

In the morning the chopping sound was not as loud as the night before. We decided to go for a ride in the canoe and check out the sound. As we drew closer to the noise, we saw a large crack in a rock by the shore line where the waves were slapping in and out.



"So, this is what's been keeping us up most of the night!" my grandfather said. We had another good laugh and I was relieved that it wasn't the Wihtiko's heartbeat after all!

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## Reclaim your Family

continued from page 20

a loving home from which the world may be entered into for short periods. In this way the peer group is not given power; the child can live quite well without it, apart from it.

Incidentally, none of us here, live in the "real world." If you want to experience the "real world" it may be necessary to immerse yourself in the slums of New York, or run your business amidst the organized crime of Chicago, or care for the dying in the stinking streets of Calcutta. We are all sheltered.

The successfully socialized individual is one who can be open to all people without being manipulated by them. The successfully socialized individual is one who has the confidence to stand for what is right in spite of rejection; to bear burdens or difficulties with hope.

Consider: Who will teach respect for parents and other adults? Who will teach the importance of service to others without personal gain? Who will teach the value of human life and the importance of protecting the very young and the very old? This socialization will not come from the typical peer group. The negative competition associated with being part of a peer group serves to create individuals who have learned to look after themselves.

I would wish to think that good teachers could make the difference in institutional socialization, but even the best teachers don't compare to peers and media in influencing children.

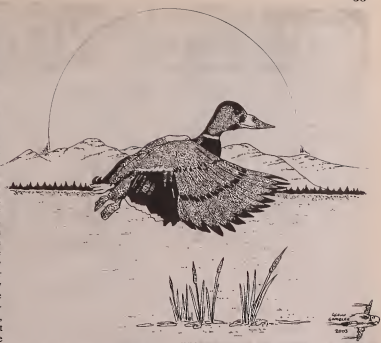
Because of the power of peers and the media, the only way for parents to regain the position of primary influence upon their children is to spend a great deal of time with them. Home schooling provides opportunity for the investment of abundant time.

I hesitate to say that home schooling is the only way to socialize your children well, but it is encouraging to know that home schooling makes the process of child socialization much easier than socializing via home and school. Parents with children in school have to work very hard in order to positively socialize their children. In fact, they must eliminate

most individual activities, and spend a great deal of their "after school" and weekend time together as a family in order to overcome the immense pressure dealt their children by peers and the media. This is the only way in which these parents will remain the primary influences in their children's lives.

With due attention to the essentials, even with all the imperfections of family life, the home is the best school of positive socialization.

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## Welcome to Lethbridge

continued from page 26

tions are offered in a historical building in downtown Lethbridge. Residents and visitors to the city can also view the Bowman Arts Centre which houses arts groups and guilds, exhibitions in its two galleries, art rental and studio classes. While in Lethbridge you can also check out the University of Lethbridge Art Gallery and its renowned collection of works.

Need some good laughs? Edge of your seat excitement? Dramatic performances? There are many events that take place throughout the year for people of all ages and interests to enjoy.

At the Yates Memorial Centre you can take in musical and performing arts throughout the year by the Lethbridge Symphony, and a variety of concerts and performances by visiting artists and community groups. During July and August, New West Theatre offers "must see" shows daily that are bursting with energy, live music and comedy.

Looking for some more fun? Check out what is happening at the ENMAX Centre. It might be WHL "Hurricane" hockey games, famous musical entertainment, sporting events, or a trade show. University and College athletic teams LA Bulls baseball in July and August are other city spectator sports to enjoy.

Major events in the city of Lethbridge include the Alberta International Airshow and Whooop Up Days Fair & Rodeo held during the summer, and AgExpo held in March. Other trade shows, agricultural events, and horse racing also take place at Lethbridge Exhibition Park.

With a population of over 70,000, Lethbridge offers a wealth of services for visitors and residents alike. City recreational facilities include numerous swimming pools and arenas, a skateboard park, outdoor spray park, indoor soccer centre, climbing wall, target range, and softball complex.

Visitors to the city who enjoy golfing can choose from the championship Paradise Canyon Gold Resort, Henderson Lake Golf Course, Bridge Valley Par 3, or Evergreen Golf Course & Driving Range.

No matter what the occasion for your visit to Lethbridge there are accommodation and camping services to fit your needs. With 16 hotel and motels, several Bed & Breakfasts, and two full-service year-round campgrounds, there are a variety of places for you to stay.

Finding somewhere to eat is also never a problem with everything from fast-food to fine dining restaurants throughout the city. Lethbridge night life offers great variety, from cozy pubs to country dance and rock & roll nightclubs. Four movie theatres with 17 cinemas give you a great choice of entertainment options.



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## Métis at high risk for chronic ailments

The release last month of the initial findings of Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) shows the Métis Nation at highest risk for chronic pain and for life threatening health conditions. In the finding entitled "Well-being of the non-reserve Aboriginal population" it showed that Métis over the age of 15 had the highest rates for heart problems and high blood pressure. The Métis also had the highest rates for stomach problems and intestinal ulcers and were nearly equal to North American Indian population for high rates of asthma and rheumatism or arthritis. The Inuit population had the lowest rates in all categories. (The APS numbers do not include the on-reserve population of First Nations.)

Clem Chartier, Vice-President of the Métis National Council and Minister of Métis Rights and Self-government said, "It is important for the Canadian government to come to terms with the health needs of the Métis population. At the same time our people are struggling with these urgent health issues, we receive minimal support from the federal government for our health care needs."

Harley Desjarlais, Minister of Health said, "the numbers released today regarding the chronic ailments are of great concern to the Métis Nation. They paint a picture of pain, people living with arthritis and stomach problems that are much higher than the Canadian norm. Our people are also at the risk of some of the biggest killers, heart problems and high blood pressure."

Other factors of interest to the Métis Nation include the lowest rates in learning an Aboriginal language. Aboriginal language being spoken in the home also dropped precipitously from 1996, when this factor was last recorded. In 1996 ability to converse in an Aboriginal language was at 4%, in 2001 the number dropped to 3%. More telling is the factor of "Aboriginal language spoken most often at home." In this category the number dropped to 1% from 3%.



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"This factor tells us that an important part of the Métis culture is in critical danger. The Michif language, which is unique to the Métis is being threatened but so are other Aboriginal languages that are a part of the Métis heritage," said Interim President and National Spokesperson Audrey Poitras. "Now is a time for change. We are committed to turning things around. We now live in a world where our Aboriginal rights are respected in the constitution of Canada and recognized by the Supreme Court of Canada. We are determined to make things better for the health and the culture of the Métis Nation."

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# Survey reveals critical health gaps

by Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Grand Chief David White Bird

The Initial Findings of the 2001 Aboriginal People's Survey (APS) from Statistics Canada have reported that our First Nations citizens living off-reserve continue to have difficulty in the areas of health, housing and water issues. Of the Aboriginal people surveyed, only First Nations citizens living in Census metropolitan areas (populations greater than 1000 and not on reserve) were included in this initial report. I understand a comprehensive 2001 APS report will be released at a later date, so I look forward to that, as it will include our on-reserve citizens and set up a more holistic view of our people from both urban and rural areas.

We continue to see numerous health gaps in our First Nations population off reserve, despite the access to and modern technology of the Canadian health care system. For example, while we have 56% of Aboriginal people reporting excellent to very good health, 45% of the same population still reports having one or more chronic conditions. Extending that incidence of chronic illness to Canada's population, we would have approximately 13.5 million Canadians reporting chronic illness; a number that would represent a national health crisis.

Diabetes remains at epidemic proportions for off-reserve First Nations citizens; when standardized, the proportion of Aboriginal people affected by diabetes is 2.5 times greater than the rest of the Canadian population; an unacceptable statistic.

While the APS Initial Findings only discuss education, housing and water, and language, it should be understood that First Nations fail to meet even these most basic needs. In Winnipeg, we have 17% of Aboriginal people living in crowded conditions, double the city's 8% of its total population. 48% of Aboriginal youth drop out of high school, compared to 26% in Canada. Even more alarming is that one-quarter of the female high school drop outs are leaving due to pregnancy or childcare issues.

While the drop out rate is high, the good news is more students are obtaining post-secondary education (39%, a 5% increase in graduating students in 1996). However, I see a continued need in this area to graduate more people in the health care fields where health problems continue to exist both on and off reserve.

According to the initial findings, our First Nation languages are at risk. I see the need for more First Nations languages to be taught, both at home and in the school. This is important for the preservation of our culture and for our people to keep in touch with the Elders and their teachings.

First Nations continue to advocate for more resources and funding to address health, education, water and housing, and language issues, to name a few. Treaty obligations and First Nations self-determination are steps that Manitoba First Nations continue to pursue in order to better the health and social outcomes of our people both on- and off-reserve, as our Treaty rights follow us regardless of residency.

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# A view from the Steeple

by Xavier Kataquapit

The Catholic religion has been part of the lives of the people of the James Bay coast for over a century. Over the years there have been several generations of people in remote First Nation communities in the north who have grown up with the Catholic religion as a main part of their lives.

The prominence that the Catholic religion has had in my own home community of Attawapiskat can be seen in the Catholic Church which stands on the shores of the river. It is a wide and tall building with a white exterior and a steep sloped metal roof. Over the main entrance is a large steeple with a bell that can be heard throughout the community. At the rear of the building is an addition which is for the living quarters for the parish priest.

The steeple and bell are accessible through a walk way from inside the church. I have climbed up to the top several times with my friends. The way up to the

steeple is a trip back in time. An access door leads to a staircase to the dimly lit attic of the church where you can see old rough cut beams and trusses from locally made timber. Large round and roughly hewn logs support the church. This was the original lumber that was cut by hand by our ancestors who lived in the community almost a hundred years ago. Inside the attic is a ladder leading to the top bell tower which is a small balcony with an impressive view of the river below. There is also a panoramic view of the whole community around the church. When we viewed Attawapiskat from the steeple as children we imagined what it must have been like a hundred years ago. Elders explained to us that small tents, wigwams and shelters once lined the shore around the impressive church and the only other buildings were the Hudson Bay store and manager's house. Today you can see many homes and buildings from the steeple.

The Catholic religion was a big part of my early experience. As far back as I can remember, our parents took us to morning mass every Sunday. When I grew older I received First Communion and later Confirmation. I always received encouragement from my parents and family to help out at the local church. Later on, I became an Alter Server and later I operated a video camera at the back of the church to document the services. This video work was broadcast on the community television for those who were not able to attend church services.

The Catholic religion has also had a great impact on the traditions and culture of our people. Originally when the missionaries arrived they meant to convert individuals and do away with any other spiritual or traditional beliefs. The missionaries ran into a stumbling block during their work in converting people. They could teach the stories and messages of the bible but could not hand out a copy of the book to anyone. They also realized that it was not just a simple matter of translating the text to another language because



Cree is only spoken and was never written. To overcome this obstacle, the missionaries developed a written form of the Cree language based on simple syllables. They taught this new written language to the people and later translated the bible for everyone to read.

This new written form of the language allowed my people to read and learn about the bible and the Catholic religion. When the translation took place it was during a time when the Cree language was in its purest and most traditional form. The new written language through the bible served to preserve the Cree language. Today, the Cree language is becoming a blend of modern terms and traditional words and phrases. I have had several Elders tell me how sad it is to know that some of the more common terms and phrases of the Cree language are slowly becoming foreign to younger people, who are living a more modern lifestyle. Now that there is a danger of losing a major part of our culture it is good to know that what the missionaries were doing to foster their religion has served to preserve our traditional Cree language and in turn our own spiritual and cultural values. Funny how assimilation works out some times.

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## Book Review

# The Great Land Rush and the Making of the Modern World, 1650 - 1900

by John C. Weaver  
published by McGill-Queen's University Press  
ISBN: 0-7735-2527-0  
review by Ennis Morris

If you haven't yet read anything by John C. Weaver, it's probably about time you did, especially if you want your appetite on subjects that involve historical non-fiction. His latest book, *The Great Land Rush and the Making of the Modern World, 1650-1900*, has just been released by McGill-Queen's University Press. History buffs will appreciate the remarkable way in which Weaver has handled the extremely complex and often scurrious nature of the subject he writes about, the conquest of North America and other countries as well. Though he isn't nearly as caustic in his comments about the "state" as he could have been, Weaver doesn't pull too many punches as he weaves his way through a manuscript that journeys from one land to another bringing readers up to date on just how far man will go to best his neighbours and covet their goods and properties.

*The Great Land Rush and the Making of the Modern World, 1650-1900*, a magnificent piece of work that engages itself on three continents, is a recounting of the history of land appropriation and distribution by European settlers in Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. It took the author a decade of travel, research and writing to get the material he needed to complete the task he'd set out for himself and every reader will benefit from the painstaking thoroughness with which Weaver compiled and completed his most recent book. And just like its predecessor, the outstanding *Crimes, Constables, and Courts: Order and Transgression in a Canadian City, 1816-1970*, released by McGill-Queen's in 1995, Weaver has traced the origin of his subject and offers readers an in depth view of the social, political and economical factors that drove the explorers, pushed the settlers, and saw political and military leaders enforce the exploitation of the Indigenous peoples, their land and everything on it. Money, or rather the want of it, as if we didn't know, is at the root of all evil and Weaver has done an outstanding job of proving it.

Though he's somewhat cynical in his writings, and refreshingly so, Weaver doesn't go so far as to lay any real blame, even on the shadiest of characters - some of whom probably need to be centered out. That could be the subject for yet another Weaver masterpiece.

*The Great Land Rush and the Making of the Modern World, 1650-1900* isn't something you're going to read overnight. In fact, it'll likely take a week

or two of reading to get through the entire 360 pages, there's just that much to absorb. The size of the notes, notes-to-pages, index and epilogue section in the back of the book is 137 pages long and an indication of the amount of research that went into this work. Weaver covers virtually every aspect of living in an era of history that ranges from the mid 1600s to the turn of the 20 Century, including in depth looks at how colonizing governments viewed the land, treated the people and helped themselves to the riches, each vying for glory in the ballrooms of their respective royal houses.

Weaver's book offers readers real insight into how the world's populations have evolved over the past 400 years. His narrative cruises through the pages of history as he brings his readers up-to-date, even explaining the goals of a particular segment or chapter to his audience through a short sketch at the beginning of important chapters.

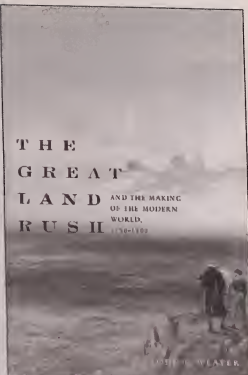
The publishers call *The Great Land Rush and the Making of the Modern World, 1650-1900* "a critique of the greatest reallocation of resources in the history of the world and an analysis of its effects on Indigenous peoples, the growth of property rights, and the evolution of ideas that make up the foundation of the modern world."

By integrating the often violent history of colonization of this period and the ensuing emergence of property rights with an examination of the decline of an aristocratic ruling class and the growth of democ-

racy and the market economy, John Weaver describes how the landscapes of North America, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa were transformed by the pursuit of resources.

This book is an interesting read and an ideal tool for writers, researchers, students and scholars looking to broaden their knowledge about one of the most notable periods in modern day history.

John C. Weaver is a professor of history at McMaster University.



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